

THE WORSHIPPING CHURCH

Pray without ceasing

I Thess. 5:17

(i) COMMUNITY AND RETREAT

There is an essential duality in Christian existence.

Christianity stands by personal faith and commitment, and yet Christian existence is intrinsically corporate: to be Christian means to be in the Community, in the Church and of the Church. However, personality should never be simply submerged in the collective. The Church consists of responsible persons. The simile of the Body should never be misinterpreted and pressed too far. The Church is composed of unique and irreplaceable personalities which can never be regarded merely as elements or cells of the whole, because each individual is in direct and immediate union with Christ and His Father—the personal is not to be dissolved in the corporate. Christian ‘togetherness’ should not degenerate into a kind of impersonalism.

The first followers of Jesus, in the ‘days of His flesh’, were not isolated individuals engaged in their private quest for truth. They were Israelites—and our Lord Himself used to declare that He was ‘not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel’ (Matt. 15:24); and the Twelve were ordered by Him to go precisely to these lost sheep, and to avoid the Gentiles and the Samaritans (Matt. 10:5, 6). The first followers of Jesus were regular members of an established and instituted Community—‘the House of Israel’, ‘the Chosen People’ of God—and they were waiting ‘for

THE WORSHIPPING CHURCH

the consolation of Israel', according to the Prophecy and Promise. In a sense, a 'Church' already existed when Jesus began His ministry. It was Israel, the People of the Covenant. His preaching was first addressed to the members of this Community. He never addressed individuals as individuals. The existing Covenant was the constant background of His preaching. The Sermon on the Mount was not addressed to an occasional crowd of accidental listeners, but rather to an 'inner circle' of those who were already following Jesus in the anticipation—or with the conviction—that He was the 'One who should come', that is, the Messiah. 'The Little Flock', that community which Jesus had gathered around Himself, was, in fact, the faithful 'Remnant' of Israel, a reconstituted 'People of God'. It was reconstituted by the Call of God, by the announcement of the Kingdom, by the 'Good News' of salvation. And yet to this call each person has to respond individually, by an act of personal faith. This personal response in faith, however, incorporates the believer into the Community. Or rather it is an existential pre-requisite of incorporation which is effected and completed in Baptism, by the grace of God. Yet one has first to believe and to commit oneself with the oath of allegiance, and then to be baptized. The 'faith of the Church' must be always personally appropriated, and continually maintained by spiritual effort.

The two aspects of Christian existence—personal and corporate—are linked together inseparably. One is saved only in the Community, and yet salvation is mediated always through personal faith and obedience.

This basic duality of Christian existence is conspicuously reflected in the realm of worship. Christian worship is at once personal and corporate, although these two aspects may be at times in tension.

There are in the Gospel two significant passages concerning prayer, and they may seem to guide the worshipper in opposite directions.

COMMUNITY AND RETREAT

In the Sermon on the Mount the multitude were exhorted to pray 'in secret', in seclusion or in solitude. Of course, this injunction was directed primarily against 'the hypocrites', against those who displayed a pretentious ostentation in worship—'in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men'; and a similar warning was extended also to almsgiving. Yet there is a deeper dimension to this invitation to 'secrecy', or privacy, in prayer. Indeed, prayer is intrinsically a *personal* act, or rather a personal *action*. It is always a person who prays. It is an intimate encounter of persons with the Living God, and, obviously, there should be no witnesses at this encounter: 'enter thy closet . . . shut thy door . . .'. One has to stand before God, alone, face to face: 'pray to Thy Father *which is in secret . . .*'. One has to *retire* for worship, or even to be secluded. And yet, paradoxically, even in this retirement or seclusion, in the solitude of one's closet, one can pray only as a member of the redeemed Community, be it the Israel of old or the Church of Christ. Indeed, no true worshipper can ever forget that *his* Father is also the *common* Father of all believers and of the whole human race. As Christians we are instructed to call in worship on *Our Father*, who is also 'the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ'. No true Christian can pray *only for himself*, even in his closet. Comprehensiveness in prayer is the mark of spiritual health and maturity. In its compass and content Christian prayer can never be strictly 'private', although it must be always personal. Moreover, Christians should be fully aware of the ultimate ground of their privilege to pray—it is precisely their membership in the Community, in the Church of Christ.

On another occasion our Lord was speaking to the disciples of the mystery of joined prayer. Believers—'two or three' of them—may 'agree' to pray for certain things in common. And then the ultimate mystery of worship is manifested: 'for where two or three are gathered together in My name, there

THE WORSHIPPING CHURCH

am I in the midst of them'. This 'agreement' is not just an occasional human assent. The 'gathering' in the name of Christ is itself a gift of the Spirit. And it presupposes a kind of spiritual preparation or training. The praying heart must be enlarged to the measure of Christ's love for man. Only in the spirit of Christ's love can individuals truly come together, so that they meet as 'brethren', that is, as brethren in Christ.

Prayer 'in secret' and prayer 'in common' actually belong to each other inseparably as aspects of the same devotional commitment and action. There is no choice: they must be practised together. Indeed, it is the rule of the Church that believers should prepare themselves for corporate worship by their personal devotions 'at home', 'in the closet'. It is spiritually dangerous to ignore this regulation. But it is no less dangerous to be so much absorbed in 'home devotions' that the urge to join with brethren in corporate worship expires or is reduced: for the climax of Christian worship—and also its centre—is the Holy Communion in which Christ Himself appears in the midst of those gathered in His name. In any case, as St. Cyprian used to explain to his flock, Christian prayer is essentially the 'prayer of the people', since 'we—the whole people—are one'. Accordingly, the goal and measure of Christian worship is *unanimity*—'with one heart and one mouth'. And we Christians must be ever grateful for the grace given to us—'with one accord to make our common supplications' unto our Father in Heaven.

(ii) REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING

Christian worship is essentially an 'encounter'. Moreover, it is also a 'dialogue'. There are always two partners in worship. The worshipper is always expecting an answer. 'Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice

REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING

of my supplication. In the day of my trouble I will call upon Thee; for Thou wilt hear me' (Ps. 85:6-7). As the prophet put it, 'I am a God at hand, and not a God far off' (Jer. 23:23, quoted by St. Cyprian in his treatise on the Lord's Prayer). The initiative is divine. We call on God because He has called us first. Thus Christian worship is a *response* to the call or 'challenge' of God. We pray because the initiative has been taken by God, and we are made aware of that divine initiative through the testimony of Scripture. We call on God whom we are given to know—because He has revealed Himself through the ages, in special events, through special messengers, and finally in His Only-begotten Son, our Beloved Lord Christ Jesus. He first called upon the people He had created, and He called upon them because He created man for His own purpose, shaping him in His own image, imprinting His similitude on every man. He has disclosed Himself in that marvellous history which is recorded on the pages of the Holy Writ. But He has done much more than that. The Son of God came down to dwell among men for their salvation. The climax of God's revelation is 'the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God'. It is the story of an Encounter, of a personal conversation with men of One who was Divine and who for our sake, 'for us men and for our salvation', had become or 'was made' man. Always Christians pray to God 'through Jesus Christ our Lord'. And this reference is crucial and decisive. One comes to the Father only through the Son, 'who has declared Him' (John 1:18). As Christians, we call on God *whom we know*—from His mighty deeds of our salvation in Christ. Accordingly, there are always two major emphases in Christian worship: *remembrance* and *thanksgiving*—*anamnesis* and *eucharistia*. They belong together inseparably.

The starting point of Christian worship is *commemoration* or *remembrance*. The Christian Faith itself is primarily an obedient and grateful *recognition* of the mighty and saving

THE WORSHIPPING CHURCH

deeds of God which culminated in the 'coming down' of the Son of God. God has acted, once for all. Man now has to acknowledge God's gracious action and to testify to His love and glory. Christian worship is only possible in the context of God's *historic Revelation*, in the perspective of 'Sacred History' which is precisely the 'History of Salvation'. Accordingly, it is determined and characterized by certain 'credal assumptions' in which we assess and interpret, in the light of faith, God's deeds and purposes. Already under the Old Dispensation the whole structure of Jewish worship was essentially 'historic'. The memory of God's mighty deeds in the past dominates the Psalter, that exemplary 'Book of Prayers' which has retained its central place also in the worship of the Christian Church, public and 'private'. Certainly, this 'memory' has been reassessed and reinterpreted in the light of the New Dispensation. But the same sense of history has been emphatically retained. The Living God to whom prayers were addressed by the Jews under the Law has now disclosed His ultimate concern 'in these last days'. The same Living God who chose Israel to be His servant and His people, has finally manifested His un failing love for man in a more excellent way in Christ Jesus. The Old Covenant was finally superseded by the New, but this New Covenant 'in Christ' was, in fact, but the climax and consummation of the Old. This intimate connection between the two is strongly emphasized in the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis*, those great and triumphant scriptural hymns of the Church. The worship of the Church was built on old foundations. The Church took over the sacred memories of Ancient Israel and it still devoutly recalls the mighty deeds of God under the Old Dispensation. The reminiscences of the Old, understood as a prophetic anticipation, reappear in many Christian hymns and prayers. Moreover, the Church has retained the old liturgical scheme or pattern of 'remembrance' and 'recital'. *Lectio divina*, the recitation of Scripture,

REMEMBRANCE AND THANKSGIVING

is still an integral and organic part of Christian worship, including both the New and the Old Testaments. It is significant that especially on great occasions of liturgical commemoration numerous readings from the Old Testament are prescribed—to emphasize the unity and continuity of 'Sacred History'. On these great days the worship of the Church has most conspicuously an historical dimension. Christian faith and hope are rooted in Sacred History. Prophecy and Gospel belong inseparably together, as promise and consummation. 'God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by the Son whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds' (Hebr. 1: 1-2).

This *historic character* of Christian worship is clearly expressed in the structure of the liturgical year. From early times there was in the Church a yearly commemoration of the crucial *Triduum*—from Cross to Resurrection—as well as a weekly commemoration of the Resurrection, on each 'Lord's Day'. Gradually a comprehensive scheme of yearly commemorations was elaborated; actually every day has now its own 'memory'. This Christian calendar has obviously a vital theological significance and many theological implications. Day by day the Church looks back to its past. The calendar testifies to the *sanctification of time*. The Church lives in the dimension of sacred memories, while at the same time looking equally to the future.

No doubt, the consummation was much greater than the promise, and its mystery passed all expectations and all understanding. Nevertheless it was precisely a 'consummation' and also—in a sense—a 'recapitulation'. Paradoxically at one and the same time it abrogated the Old and confirmed its perennial significance. The very nature of Sacred History has been radically and profoundly changed, and yet it is still the same continuing history. Abraham is still 'the father of

all believers', not only in the Old Israel but in the Christian Church. The saints of the Old Dispensation found their place in the Christian calendar. Since the coming of Christ, by virtue of the Incarnation, God is now guiding His People as it were 'from the inside', and no more 'from the outside', as happened *sub umbraculo legis*. The Christian remembrance is much more than just a memory or reminiscence. Indeed, Christians are bound to look back to the mighty events which are the foundation of their faith and hope: Incarnation, Cross and Resurrection, Pentecost. But these individual events of the past are, at the same time, paradoxically present in the Church here and now. The Incarnation of the Word is at once an historic event of the past which can and should be 'remembered' in the ordinary way, and also *an abiding presence* of the Lord which can be directly perceived and recognized at all times and at any particular time by the eye of faith, in the Church. This changes radically the meaning and character of *anamnesis* in Christian worship. There is much more than merely an enlargement or extension of common historical perspective. The *accomplishment* of the Promise was not just an extra event in the homogeneous sequence of happenings. It was an 'event' indeed, but it was an event *which never passes*. Of course, it can be dated with a certain measure of chronological accuracy, and we are actually counting 'the years of the Lord', *anni Domini*—from Christ's Nativity at Bethlehem, *post Christum natum*. Yet that which is 'remembered' is also actually present, and will be present 'unto the ages of ages'—till He comes again. For even before He comes He is already present in the Church. It is precisely His abiding presence which makes the Church what it is, that is, the Body of Christ. Now this mysterious presence of Christ—in the Church and within the world—has been *inaugurated in history*, by a sovereign intervention of God, by a decisive revelatory 'earthquake', to use the bold expression of St. Gregory of Nazianzus. The acknowledge-

ment of the Presence is inseparably coupled with the memory of the Past. This paradoxical coincidence of Past and Present constitutes the distinctive and unique characteristic of the Christian 'memory', which reaches its culmination in the Eucharistic *anamnesis* or 'commemoration'.

The Holy Eucharist is the centre of Christian worship. An elaborate cycle of daily offices has been built, in the course of time, around this centre of devotion. Moreover, the Eucharist is not only a particular 'office' or *akolouthia*, but primarily a sacrament, a *mysterion*. Now the Eucharistic rite is obviously an *anamnesis*, a 'Memorial of the Lord', performed 'in His memory', according to His ordinance. But, on the other hand, it is undoubtedly not a mere commemoration of the Last Supper. In fact, it *is* the Last Supper itself. Christ Himself is actually *present* in the sacred rite, both as its supreme and perennial minister and as the victim, 'for Thou Thyself both offerest and art offered'. In the strong words of St. John Chrysostom, each Eucharistic celebration *is* actually *the Last Supper* itself, in its full reality, without any diminution. '*This table is the same as that and has nothing less*' (*In Matt. hom. 82*). 'The offering is the same, whether it be offered by some ordinary man, or by Paul or Peter. That which Christ gave to His disciples, and that which the priests minister now is the same. This is in no wise inferior to that, because it is not men that sanctify even this, but the Same who sanctified the one sanctifies the other also' (*In II Tim. hom. 2*). *There is no difference*, St. John concluded. The Eucharistic Sacrament is neither a mere remembrance nor a 'repetition' of the Last Supper. It is rather its 'manifestation' or extension. Worshippers are, as it were, *taken back* to the Upper Room and made participants of the same sacred Supper. This paradoxical nature of sacramental *anamnesis*, which is at the same time an actual and immediate encounter, or rather communion, with the ever abiding Lord, discloses the ultimate mystery of Christian existence. The Body is

THE WORSHIPPING CHURCH

never separated from the Head. The Church is more than just an assembly of believers, of those who believe and acknowledge the mighty deeds of God 'in ages past', including the times of the Gospel. It is above all the Body of Christ, a corporation of them who dwell in Him and in whom Christ Himself is dwelling and abiding, according to His own solemn promise. There is in the Church a certain mysterious *continuity between Christ the Saviour and Christians*—who are being saved precisely as 'members' of His Body—whatever the manner in which we may attempt to comprehend and to explain this ultimate mystery, the mystery of the Church. St. John Chrysostom once endeavoured to describe this mystery in daring words, speaking in the person of Christ Himself: 'I pursued thee, I ran after thee, that I might overtake thee. I united and joined thee to Myself. . . . Above I hold thee, and below I embrace thee. . . . I descended below. I not only am mingled with thee, I am entwined in thee. . . . Things united remain yet in their own limits, but I am interwoven with thee. I would have no more division between us. I will that we both be one' (*In I Tim. hom. 15, sub fine*). St. John had in mind precisely the mystery of Communion.

Indeed, the Eucharistic *anamnesis* is also a *koinonia*, communion, encounter. Those who 'remember' or 'commemorate' the Lord, according to His ordinance, are not 'outside Him' but 'in Him', *in Christo*, as branches of a vine. They belong to His 'fulness', to the *pleroma* which is the Church (Eph. 1:22, 23). In no sense are Christians outsiders. They are members of Christ. Christian worship is the worship of those who are inside. It is significant that this great mystery of our Lord's Presence has been from the earliest Christian times described as *Eucharist*, that is, *Thanksgiving*. The major prayer in the rite, the *anaphora*, is precisely an elaborate *anamnesis* or recollection of the *Magnalia Dei*, from Creation itself up to the Last Supper and

ENCOUNTER AND DIALOGUE

Christ's solemn injunction 'to do it in His remembrance'. The Sacrament is assessed in a wide perspective of the History of Salvation. Yet it is an *anamnesis in the form of thanksgiving, eucharistia*. Gratitude is the proper response of man to the benevolence or *philanthropia* of God. As a response of man to the saving Providence of God, especially to the mystery of our Redemption, by Jesus Christ and in Him, and to the unfathomable gift of New Life in the Spirit, Christian worship is primarily an expression of grateful acknowledgement, of praise and adoration. It culminates ultimately in *doxology*. It is significant that we are directed to conclude our prayers and intercessions with doxologies: '*for all glory, honour, and worship befitteeth Thee . . .*'. It should be also our starting point: *Hallowed be Thy Name* is the first and introductory petition of the Lord's Prayer and only then do intercessions follow.

(iii) ENCOUNTER AND DIALOGUE

Worship is the norm of Christian existence. It should be the constant disposition or attitude of the Christian man. Indeed, to worship God means precisely to be aware of His presence, to dwell constantly in this presence. It is through worship that the 'new man' is being formed in the believer, and the baptismal grace of adoption is actualized. The Christian man must be always in the state of worship, whether it is expressed in words or not. In its essence worship is the orientation of man towards God. *Into Thy hands I commend my spirit. . . .*

Prayer is a bounden duty of believers. Faith and worship cannot be separated. But prayer is also a daring endeavour, inasmuch as it is also a spiritual urge of those who believe. One meets God always with awe and trembling, if also with love and adoration. In prayer one has to begin with an act of detachment—'to lay aside all the cares of this life'. In no

sense is this an easy task, especially when we want to present precisely these 'cares'—our troubles and needs—to Him, in search for help and illumination. That is why we are instructed to pray 'in the closet', in retirement, in retreat from 'the world'. However, the walls of the chamber, the shut door, and any other external fences, cannot by themselves prevent distraction or dissipation. This can be achieved only by an intense internal effort, by steady and continuous training, by a total reorientation of one's life. But detachment is not indifference. God Himself is not indifferent to man's needs or 'cares'.

It has been often suggested, by many authorities and expert masters of spiritual life, that 'prayer books', the fixed formularies of worship, are only intended for the beginners. This is undoubtedly true, if the statement is properly understood. Fixed formulae are, of course, no more than a means towards something much greater. Yet they are an appropriate means. It is spiritually dangerous to neglect the 'books', to dispense with them hastily, and to indulge arbitrarily in extempore improvisations of one's own composition. It is more than merely a question of discipline. The settled formulae not only help to fix the attention, but also feed the heart and mind of worshippers, offering topics for meditation and reminding them of the mighty deeds of God. There is no room for psychologism or subjectivism in Christian worship. The goal and purpose of worship is the '*prayer of the mind*', to the complete exclusion of all 'passions'. Serenity is here the measure. *Let all human flesh be silent, and with awe and trembling stand.* . . .

There is in the Church a fixed rule or order of worship, even for prayer 'in the closet'. And it is our duty to follow it. Of course, there must be more than a mere recitation: the words must come from the heart, and the heart may also find its own words. But spontaneous prayer can come only after an assiduous training. A sound balance should be

maintained between 'recitation' and 'improvisation' in worship, although obviously there can be no formal rules for this. The purpose of training is to introduce the worshipper into a 'conversation' with God, to guide him into 'encounter' with the Living God. It is significant that most of the Church's offices, including the rule for prayers at home, begin with a most daring appeal to the Holy Spirit, the Heavenly King: *Come and abide in us*. In fact, it is an anticipation of our ultimate and final goal—to *acquire the Holy Spirit of God*. The end is paradoxically anticipated from the very beginning. The search for the Spirit is the moving force of worship. It may happen that at a certain moment in worship the Spirit starts speaking in our hearts. Then one has to stop and listen. 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. . . . The Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered' (Rom. 8:16,26). At this point prayer, in the ordinary sense of the word, ceases. As St. Seraphim of Sarov said, one can no more ask, 'Come and abide in us', when the Spirit has already come and speaks in the heart. One can but receive the visitation with joy, but also with humility. Of course, the Spirit manifests itself only in the souls which have been prepared by a long and steady exercise in devotion. There is no room for human 'improvisation'. It is the Spirit that improvises.

At this very point the crucial problem arises: in what manner can and should we correlate these personal devotions 'in the closet' with the corporate worship in the community? The encounter with God, while praying 'in the closet', is certainly the core of worship. It is a genuine encounter and a communion with God. What, then, is missing here? Why and how should this intimate encounter with the Living God in the secrecy of the closet be supplemented by participation in the public and corporate worship of Community? These are not idle or vain questions. They are of

immense practical importance, especially urgent and burning in our own time. Nor are they simple questions which would admit of a general and unvarying solution. In fact, there is a constant tension in the devotional practice of individual Christians between 'private devotions' and 'corporate worship', and it can be overcome only by an intensive meditation on the articles of faith. A certain tendency towards a peculiar kind of spiritual 'individualism' seems to be inherent in the practice of solitary prayer, if only subconsciously. Now it is indeed true that 'in the closet' the worshipper enters into an intimate and direct conversation with the Living God and acquires the Holy Spirit. It is this intimate encounter with God which is usually stressed in our current manuals of spiritual life. At the same time, of course, it is always assumed that those who worship 'in the closet' are members of the Church. But this aspect of the matter is not always sufficiently emphasized. In fact, Christians are only entitled to pray as members of the Community. This is not only an objective presupposition, but an internal spiritual condition, an integral part of their devotional orientation. 'Private devotions' are inevitably but a preparation for, and a sequel to, 'corporate worship'. They always are pointing beyond themselves. *Prayer is intrinsically subordinate to sacraments*. It is possible only on the basis of our sacramental incorporation into the Body of Christ, through Holy Baptism. Accordingly, the ultimate 'encounter' is realized also in a *sacramental* way, in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist. All 'private devotions' must be consciously directed towards this sacramental goal. It is highly significant that Nicolas Cabasilas wrote his great book *Life in Christ* in the form of a treatise on sacraments—the triad of the sacraments of initiation: Baptism, Chrismation, Eucharist. The root of Christian existence is there, and of Christian worship too. One should also remember at this point Father John of Kronstadt and his teaching.

For Cabasilas, the Eucharist is an '*ultimate mystery*', a sacramental consummation, 'the goal and term of life'. The Eucharist is the summit of Christian pilgrimage. And when this final stage of sacramental life has been achieved, there is nothing else that man may desire or need. In this mystery or sacrament, not only are the gifts of the Spirit granted and received, but the Risen Lord Himself is present. One cannot move farther. When Christ is in us, what else can we seek? Christ abides in the communicants. This is a 'perfect sacrament', more perfect than any other, the beginning and the end of all blessings, the ultimate goal of all human aspirations. God is united with us 'in a most perfect union', and nothing can be more perfect than this marvellous conjunction. . . . Cabasilas was here following in the steps of St. John Chrysostom, with his daring Eucharistic realism. The same experience of intimate communion with Christ is expressed in those remarkable prayers which the Church orders to be recited before and after communion by all participants. There is more than an encounter: there is union and communion.

In the Eucharist those who are separated and estranged from each other by human frailty are brought together into the perfect and intimate unity of the One Body in Christ. Human exclusiveness and the mutual impenetrability of men are overcome. The faithful are 'co-members' of each other through Christ in the Church, or even 'con-corporeal' with each other and with Christ in His Body, to use the phrase of St. Cyril of Alexandria. In the Eucharist the essential unity of Christians finds its perfect expression. This unity is not restricted or confined to those who are taking actual part in a particular celebration on a particular day. Each celebration is in reality universal, and the Eucharist is ever one. Christ is never divided. Every Liturgy is celebrated in communion with the whole Church, Catholic and Universal. It is celebrated in the name, and by the authority, of the whole Church. Spiritually in every celebration the whole Church, 'the whole

THE WORSHIPPING CHURCH

company of heaven', takes an invisible, yet real, part. This unity extends not only to all places but also to all times. It includes all generations and all ages. The living and the departed are to be 'commemorated' at every celebration of the Divine Liturgy. It is not only a remembrance, in a narrow and psychological sense of the word, not only a witness of our human sympathy and concern, but rather an insight into the universal fellowship of all believers, living and departed, in Christ, the common Risen Lord. In this sense, the Eucharist is a manifestation of the mystery of the Church, or rather of the mystery of the Whole Christ. As has been already stated, every celebration is identical with the Last Supper. It is in the Eucharist that the Church is aware and conscious of her profound unity and anticipates her final perfection in the age to come. The Eucharist is not only an expression of our human fellowship and of our human brotherhood, but above all an expression or an image of the divine mystery of our Redemption. It is a mystery of Christ. Every time that the Eucharist is celebrated, we witness to and we live in this perfect unity, initiated and inaugurated by the Incarnate and Risen Lord. We pray in the name of all mankind, of all those who have been called and have responded to the call. We pray as the Church—the whole Church is praying with us, or rather *in us* and through us.

Of course, one has to be spiritually prepared for this participation in the mystery of the Worshipping Church, cleansed and purified. Worship in 'the closet' is indispensable. But it can be consummated only in the common celebration of the ultimate mystery of Christ, in communion with all our brethren.

The story of Redemption is not yet completed. Rooted in the commemoration of the past, Christians are living still in expectation: the Kingdom is still to come. Yet, on the other hand, the Church herself is the token of this glorious consummation and from the early times she has prayed for

ENCOUNTER AND DIALOGUE

its fulfilment: 'As this broken bread was scattered upon the mountains, and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy Kingdom' (*Didache*, ix. 4).

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