Readings for Silent Meditation

1. "The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life... [I]n the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch" (Catechism, n.1324).

The Eucharist is not just one aspect of Christ's person and work of salvation. It contains the entire mystery of Christ. We must not see in it merely the sacramental and substantial presence of his body, blood, soul and divinity as "an item", but also everything he ever said and did while on earth and indeed everything he continues to do in and from heaven. There is no mystery of his life that is not contained in the Eucharist. For example, the very same humanity he took from the Virgin Mother and to which she later gave birth; and which was transfigured on Mount Tabor; and which was scourged and crucified and expired. Because of his divinity, every aspect and deed and word of his humanity has eternal value, not only at the time it happened but across and in every other time, including our own. In the tabernacle, and then in our hands and bodies, the presence of the Eucharist is, too, the presence of the incarnation, of the Gospel preached by Jesus, of his miracles, his mercy, his sweat and tears. All the mysteries of the Rosary and more are somehow present and alive in the Eucharist and seek to penetrate actively into our lives through the Spirit so that we may be conformed more and more to Christ.

2. "The Eucharistic Sacrifice makes present not only the mystery of the Saviour's passion and death, but also the mystery of the resurrection which crowned his sacrifice" (St. John Paul II).

In the Eucharist, heaven is on earth and earth in heaven. It works a miracle like that of the incarnation, for it introduces the bodily presence of the incarnate God into our midst, on the altar as once in the womb of the Virgin. It prolongs in and through time the redemption of mankind and applies it to each generation, giving us the pledge of resurrection and feeding us with the Risen Lord who has conquered death. The Mystery of the Cross, death and resurrection of Jesus, unites and reconciles these two poles. It also makes all time present in an eternal now to God and to us, to God directly and to us through the sacramental veil. In fact, the Eucharist "suspends" the natural limitations of space and time, making the adorable person of Christ and his redemptive sacrifice and glorious Resurrection present to all men in all places and successive times, building up and enriching his Church across time and space. Christ thus gradually "invades" all time and space and, therefore, causes his Church to do the same.

THURSDAY AGAPE

EVENING PRAYER (VESPERS)
THURSDAY, WEEK 2
ORDINARY TIME

Introduction (All stand)

Priest: O God, come to our aid.
People: O Lord, make haste to help us.
Priest: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,
People: as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia.

Hymn

Come to the Feast
of heaven and earth!
Come to the table of plenty!
God will provide
for all that we need,
Here at the table of plenty.

O Come and sit at my table
Where saints and sinners are friends.
I wait to welcome the lost and lonely
to share the cup of my love.

O come and eat without money,
Come to drink without price.
My feast of gladness will feed your spirit
With faith and fullness of life.

Psalms and Canticle (All sit)

Psalm 71 (72)
The Messiah's royal power

"They opened their treasures and offered him gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh" (Mt 2:11).

Priest: I will make you the light of the nations to bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.

Men: O God, give your judgement to the king,
to a king's son your justice,
that he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgement.

May the mountains bring forth peace for the people
and the hills, justice.
May he defend the poor of the people
and save the children of the needy
and crush the oppressor.

He shall endure like the sun and the moon
from age to age.
He shall descend like rain on the meadow,
like raindrops on the earth.

In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.
He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds.

Before him his enemies shall fall,
his foes lick the dust.
The kings of Tarshish and the sea coasts
shall pay him tribute.

The kings of Sheba and Seba
shall bring him gifts.
Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

All: Lord, bless your people.

Priest: We pray for all who live the Christian life: Father, look on them with kindness, and see in them the face of your beloved Son.
All: Lord, bless your people.

Priest: Remember those who have consecrated themselves to serve you in the religious life: enrich them in their poverty, love them in their chastity, lighten their hearts in obedience to you.
All: Lord, bless your people.

Priest: Give rest to those who have died in Christ: for with you there is mercy, and fullness of redemption.
All: Lord, bless your people.

Our Father

Priest: We beseech your mercy, Lord, as we offer you this evening praise. Keep our hearts always engaged in meditating on your law, and grant us the light and reward of eternal life. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. *All:* **Amen.**

Priest: The Lord bless us, and keep us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life. *All:* **Amen.**

Men: The Almighty works mar-*vels* for me.
Ho-*ly* his name!
His mercy is from *age* to age,
on *those* who fear him.

He puts forth his *arm* in strength
and scatters *the* proud-hearted.
He casts the mighty *from* their thrones
and rai-*ses* the lowly.

He fills the starving *with* good things,
sends the rich *a*-way empty.

He protects Isra-*el*, his servant,
Remembe-*ring* his mercy,
the mercy promised *to* our fathers,
to Abraham and his *sons* for ever.

Glory be to the Father and *to* the Son and to the *Ho*-ly Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and e-*ver* shall be, world without *end.*
Amen.

All: The Lord has satisfied and filled with good things those who hungered for justice.

Prayers and intercessions

Priest: Let us lift up our hearts in thankfulness to God our Father, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual gift.
All: Lord, bless your people.

Priest: Father, look on the Pope, our bishops, and all Christian leaders: sustain their faith, their love, and their courage.
All: Lord, bless your people.

Priest: Almighty God, we pray for our country: may it promote justice and fraternity in the world.

All: I will make you the light of the nations to bring my salvation to the ends of the earth.

Psalm 71 (72)

Priest: The Lord will save the poor; from oppression he will rescue their lives.

Men: For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor.

From oppression he will rescue their lives,
to him their blood is dear.
Long may he live,
may the gold of Sheba be given him.
They shall pray for him without ceasing
and bless him all the day.

May corn be abundant in the land
to the peaks of the mountains.
May its fruit rustle like Lebanon;
may men flourish in the cities
like grass on the earth.

May his name be blessed for ever
and endure like the sun.
Every tribe shall be blessed in him,
all nations bless his name.

Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel,
who alone works wonders,
ever blessed his glorious name.
Let his glory fill the earth.
Amen! Amen!

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

All: The Lord will save the poor; from oppression he will rescue their lives.

Canticle **Apocalypse 11**

The Judgement

Priest: Victory and empire have now been won by our God.

Women: We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
who are and who were,
that you have taken your great power
and begun to reign.

The nations raged,
but your wrath came,
and the time for the dead to be judged,
for rewarding your servants, the prophets and saints,
and those who fear your name,
both small and great.

Now the salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God
and the authority of his Christ have come,
for the accuser of our brethren has been thrown down,
who accuses them day and night before our God.

And they have conquered him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony,
for they loved not their lives even unto death.
Rejoice, then, O heaven,
and you that dwell therein.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

All: Victory and empire have now been won by our God.

Short Reading **1 Peter 1:22-23**

You have been obedient to the truth and purified your souls until you can love like brothers, in sincerity; let your love for each other be real and from the heart – your new birth was not from any mortal seed but from the everlasting word of the living and eternal God.

Short Responsory

Priest: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.
All: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.
Priest: Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.
All: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.
Priest: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
All: The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.

Canticle *(All stand)* **Magnificat**

My soul rejoices in the Lord

Priest: The Lord has satisfied and filled with good things those who hungered for justice.

Women: My soul glori-*fies* the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in *God*, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant *in* her lowliness;
henceforth all ages will *call* me blessed.