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## ***Propositions of Synod on the Eucharist, Nos. 1-15 "Jesus Created a Radical Novelty"***



VATICAN CITY, OCT. 24, 2005 ([Zenit.org](http://Zenit.org)).- Here are the first fifteen of the 50 propositions sent to Benedict XVI by the Synod of Bishops on the Eucharist.

The Pope has allowed the publication, official and non-official, of a provisional version in Italian, on which this working translation is based. Others will be published by ZENIT in subsequent days.

The Synod of Bishops closed Oct. 23 in Rome, officially closing the Year of the Eucharist proclaimed by Pope John Paul II. The synod was to produce two documents: a message to the church and the world, and a set of propositions or recommendations for action to go to the pope. Because the synod is an advisory body, it is up to the pope to decide what to do with its conclusions. This was the 21st Synod of Bishops since Paul VI created the institution in 1965.

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Introduction

Proposition 1

Documents Submitted to the Supreme Pontiff

Submitted to the consideration of the Supreme Pontiff, in addition to the documents on the Eucharist, source and summit of the life and mission of the Church, relative to this Synod, namely the "Lineamenta," the "Instrumentum laboris," the reports "ante and post disceptationem" and the texts of the interventions, both those presented in the Hall in writing, as well as the reports of the minor circles and their discussions, [are] above all some specific propositions that the Fathers have regarded of particular importance.

The Synodal Fathers humbly request that the Holy Father take advantage of the opportunity to publish a document on the sublime mystery of the Eucharist in the

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life and mission of the Church.

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## Proposition 2

### The Liturgical Reform of Vatican II

The Synodal Assembly recalled with gratitude the beneficial influence that the liturgical reform carried out since the Second Vatican Council has had for the life of the Church. It has highlighted the beauty of the Eucharistic action that shines in the liturgical rite. Abuses were verified in the past; they are not even lacking today, although they have diminished greatly. However, such incidents cannot darken the goodness and validity of the reform, which still has riches that are not totally explored; rather, they call for greater care in regard to the "ars celebrandi," which favors "actuosa participatio."

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## First Part

### The People of God Educated in Faith in the Eucharist

#### Faith in the Eucharist

## Proposition 3

### The Novelty of the Paschal Mystery

When instituting the Eucharist, Jesus created a radical novelty: He fulfilled in himself the new and eternal Covenant. Jesus inscribed, in the context of the Jewish ritual supper -- which concentrates in the memorial of the past event of deliverance from Egypt, its present importance and future promise -- his total surrender. The true immolated Lamb sacrificed himself once and for all in the paschal mystery and is able to liberate man from sin and the darkness of death forever. The Lord himself offered us the essential elements of the "new worship." The Church, inasmuch as Bride and led by the Holy Spirit, is called to celebrate the redeeming sacrifice of her Bridegroom in history and makes it present sacramentally in all cultures. This "great mystery" is celebrated in the liturgical forms that the Church, illuminated by the Holy Spirit, develops in time and space.

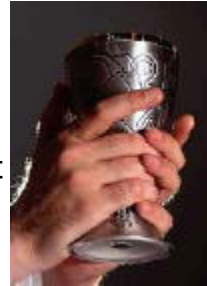
In the celebration of the Eucharist, Jesus, substantially present, introduces us through his Spirit in the Pasch: We pass from death to life, from slavery to freedom, from sadness to joy. The celebration of the Eucharist reinforces in us this paschal dynamism and consolidates our identity. With Christ, we are able to overcome hatred with love, violence with peace, pride with humility, egoism with

generosity, discord with reconciliation, despair with hope. United to Jesus Christ, dead and risen, we can carry his cross each day and follow him, in view of the resurrection of the flesh, following the example of the martyrs of antiquity and of our days. The Eucharist, as paschal mystery, is pledge of the future glory and from it is already born the eschatological transformation of the world. Celebrating the Eucharist, we anticipate this joy in the great communion of saints.

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#### **Proposition 4**

The Eucharist is a gift that springs from the love of the Father, from the filial obedience of Jesus carried to the point of the sacrifice of the cross, made present for us in the sacrament, of the power of the Holy Spirit that, called over the gifts by the prayer of the Church, transforms them into the body and blood of Jesus. In it is revealed fully the mystery of the love of God for humanity and his plan of salvation is fulfilled, characterized by absolute gratitude, which responds solely to his promises, fulfilled beyond all measure.



The Church receives, worships, celebrates this gift with tremulous and faithful obedience, without arrogating to herself any powers of availability which are not the ones that Jesus entrusted to her so that the sacramental rite is realized in history.

Under the cross, the Most Holy Virgin unites herself completely to the Savior's sacrificial gift. By her immaculate conception and fullness of grace, Mary inaugurates the participation of the Church in the Redeemer's sacrifice.

The faithful "have the right to receive abundantly from the sacred pastors the spiritual goods of the Church, above all the aids of the Word of God and the sacraments" (LG, 37; cf. CCC Canon 213; CCEO Canon 16), when the law does not prohibit it.

To such a right, corresponds the duty of the pastors to do everything possible so that access to the Eucharist is not hindered in practice, showing in this regard intelligent care and great generosity. The Synod appreciates and is grateful to priests who, even at the cost at times of great and risky sacrifices, assure to Christian communities this gift of life and educate them to celebrate it in truth and fullness.

#### **Proposition 5**

Eucharist and Church

The relationship between the Eucharist and the Church is understood in the great

Christian tradition as constitutive of the being and acting of the Church herself, to the point that Christian antiquity designated with the same words, "Corpus Christi," the body born of the Virgin Mary, the Eucharistic body and the ecclesial body of Christ.

This unity of the body is manifested in the Christian communities and is renewed in the Eucharistic act that unites and differentiates them in particular Churches, "in quibus et ex quibus una et unica Ecclesia catholica existit" (LG, 23). The term "catholic" expresses the universality stemming from the unity that the Eucharist, celebrated in each Church, fosters and builds.

Thus, in the Eucharist, the particular Churches have, in the universal Church, the task of making visible their own unity and diversity. This bond of fraternal love reveals the Trinitarian communion. The Councils and Synods express in history this fraternal aspect of the Church. By this very ecclesial dimension, the Eucharist establishes a strong bond of unity of the Catholic Church with the Orthodox Churches, which have preserved the genuine and integral nature of the mystery of the Eucharist. The ecclesial character of the Eucharist might also be a privileged point in the dialogue with the communities born with the Reformation.

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### **Proposition 6: Eucharistic Adoration**

The Synod of Bishops -- recognizing the manifold fruits of Eucharistic Adoration in the life of the People of God, in a large part of the world -- forcefully encourages that this form of prayer -- so often recommended by the venerable Servant of God John Paul II -- be maintained and promoted, according to the traditions, both in the Latin Church as well as in the Oriental Churches. It recognizes that this practice springs from Eucharistic action that, in itself, is the greatest act of adoration of the Church, which enables the faithful to participate fully, consciously, actively and fruitfully in the sacrifice of Christ, according to the desire of the Second Vatican Council, and refers to the same. Thus conceived, Eucharistic adoration keeps the faithful in their Christian love and service to others, and promotes greater personal sanctity as well as that of the Christian communities. In this connection, the renewal of Eucharistic adoration, also among young people, is manifested today as a promising characteristic of many communities. For this reason, in order to foster visits to the Blessed Sacrament, care must always be taken, insofar as possible, that churches in which the Blessed Sacrament is present stay open.



May pastoral programs help communities and movements to know the

appropriate place of Eucharistic adoration in order to cultivate the attitude of wonder before the great gift of the real presence of Christ. In this connection, Eucharistic adoration is encouraged also in the course of preparation for First Communion.

To promote adoration, it is appropriate to recognize especially institutes of consecrated life and associations of the faithful dedicated especially to it in different ways, and to help them so that Eucharistic devotion will be more biblical, liturgical and missionary.

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## **Eucharist and Sacraments**

### **Proposition 7: Eucharist and Sacrament of Reconciliation**

Love of the Eucharist leads to ever greater appreciation of the sacrament of Reconciliation, in which God's merciful goodness makes possible a new beginning of Christian life and shows an intrinsic relationship between Baptism, sin and the sacrament of Reconciliation. Worthy reception of the Eucharist calls for the state of grace.

It is a task of great importance that the Bishop promote in the diocese a decisive recovery of the pedagogy of conversion that is born of the Eucharist and that it favor, because of this, frequent individual confession. Priests, for their part, are to dedicate themselves generously to the administration of the sacrament of Penance.

The Synod earnestly recommends to Bishops that they not allow in their dioceses recourse to collective absolutions if it is not in objectively exceptional situations, established in the "motu proprio" "Misericordia Dei," of April 7, 2002, of Pope John Paul II. Bishops must see to it, moreover, that in every church there be suitable places for confessions (cf. CCC 964, Paragraph 2). It is recommended that the Bishop appoint the confessor.

In this perspective, it would also be necessary to further the dimension of reconciliation already present in the Eucharistic celebration (cf. CCC 1436), specifically in the penitential rite, so that true moments of reconciliation might be experienced in the same. Non-sacramental penitential celebrations, mentioned in the ritual of the sacrament of Penance and of Reconciliation, can awaken the sense of sin and effect a spirit of penance and communion in Christian communities, thus preparing hearts for the celebration of the sacrament.

The renewal of Eucharistic spirituality can be an occasion to further the understanding and practice of indulgences. This Synod reminds that Bishops and parish priests may request a plenary indulgence of the Apostolic Penitentiary for

different celebrations and anniversaries. The Synod encourages a renewed catechesis on indulgences.

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### **Proposition 8: Eucharist and Sacrament of Marriage**

In the Eucharist, the love of Jesus Christ is expressed, who loves the Church as his Bride to the point of giving his life for her. The Eucharist corroborates in an inexhaustible way the indissoluble unity and love of every Christian marriage.



We want to express our special spiritual closeness to all those who have based their families on the sacrament of marriage. The Synod recognizes the singular mission of woman in the family and in the society and encourages spouses, integrated in their parishes, or in small communities, movements, ecclesial associations, to undertake paths of marital spirituality, nourished by the Eucharist.

The sanctification of Sunday is also put into practice in family life. Because of this, the family, as "domestic Church," must be considered a primary realm by the Christian community. The family initiates children in ecclesial faith and the liturgy, above all in the Holy Mass.

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### **Proposition 9: Eucharist and Polygamy**

The nature of marriage exacts that man be definitively united to only one woman and vice versa. In this perspective, the polygamous must be helped to open to the Christian faith to integrate their human plan in the novelty and radical nature of Christ's message. In regard to catechumens, Christ reaches them in their concrete situation and calls them to the renunciations and ruptures exacted by communion, which one day they will be able to celebrate through the sacraments, above all, the Eucharist.

Meanwhile, the Church supports them with pastoral care full of gentleness and firmness.

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### **Proposition 10: Modality of Sunday Assemblies Awaiting a Priest**

In countries in which the penury of priests and great distances make participation in the Sunday Eucharist practically impossible, it is important that Christian communities come together to praise the Lord and to remember the Day dedicated to him, in communion with the Bishop, with the whole particular Church and with the universal Church. It is also very important to specify the nature of the commitment of the faithful in their participation in these Sunday assemblies.

Care must be taken that the Liturgy of the Word, organized under the leadership of a deacon or of a leader of the community to whom the competent authority has regularly entrusted this ministry, is carried out according to a specific ritual approved for this purpose. So as not to deprive the faithful for a long time from Eucharistic Communion, priests must make every effort to visit these communities frequently. It corresponds to the Ordinaries and to the Episcopal Conferences to regulate the possibility to distribute Communion.

All confusion must be avoided between celebration of the Holy Mass and the Sunday assembly awaiting a priest. Therefore, the faithful must be encouraged to go, whenever possible, where Sunday Mass is celebrated.

The Episcopal Conferences must prepare appropriate materials that explain the meaning of the celebration of the Word of God with distribution of Communion and the norms that regulate it.

### **Proposition 11: Scarcity of Priests**

The centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church makes the problem of the serious lack of priests in some parts of the world felt with acute pain. Many faithful are thus deprived of the Bread of life. To respond to the Eucharistic hunger of the People of God that often and for long periods must do without the Eucharistic celebration, it is necessary to take recourse to effective pastoral initiatives. In this context, the Synodal Fathers affirmed the importance of the inestimable gift of ecclesiastical celibacy in the praxis of the Latin Church.

Referring to the Magisterium, especially to the Second Vatican Council and to the Magisterium of the last Popes, the Fathers requested that the reasons for the relationship between celibacy and priestly ordination be properly explained to the faithful, in full respect of the tradition of the Eastern Churches. Some have alluded to the "viri probati" [priestly ordination of married men of proven virtue], but this theory has been considered as a path that must not be followed.

Moreover, it must be taken into account that the Christian quality of the community and its force of attraction have decisive weight when it comes to offering the Eucharistic gift to all the faithful. Specifically, it is about:

-- urging pastors to promote priestly vocations; to discover them and to become their "heralds," beginning with adolescents and paying attention to acolytes;

-- not being afraid to propose to young people the radical nature of the following of Christ -- to sensitize families, which in some cases are indifferent or even opposed;

-- cultivating prayer for vocations in all communities and ecclesial realms;

-- Bishops seeking -- and also involving Religious Families, while respecting the charism proper to them -- a more equitable distribution of the clergy and urging the clergy itself to greater willingness to serve the Church where there is need, even at the cost of sacrifice.

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### **Proposition 12: Vocational Pastoral Program**

By way of response to the Church's urgent duty to offer the gift of the Eucharist to all faithful on a regular basis, and given the scarcity of priests in different places, we turn to the Lord and ask him persistently to send laborers to his harvest.

For our part, we intend to reinforce the vocational pastoral program and the vocational dimension of all pastoral care, especially of youth and the family. Therefore, we request

-- that groups of altar servers be constituted and that they be given spiritual support;

-- that Eucharistic adoration for vocations be spread in parishes, schools and ecclesial movements;

-- that parish priests and all priests be encouraged to support young people spiritually and to form them, inviting them to follow Christ in the priesthood with their testimony;

-- that a vocational center or minor seminary be organized, according to possibilities, in [local] Churches.

-- that we, Bishops and priests, be committed in the first person in this kind of pastoral care, giving example of enthusiasm and piety.

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### **Catechesis and Mystagogy**

### **Proposition 13: The Sequence of Sacraments of Christian Initiation**

The close connection between Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist is not sufficiently perceived. It is opportune, therefore, to explain that we are baptized and confirmed in function of the Eucharist. A better insertion must therefore be favored of the relationship between the three sacraments of Christian initiation in the celebration of each of these sacraments, regardless of the chronological order or the age of the celebration of Confirmation and First Communion. In this connection, an in-depth theological and pastoral study of Confirmation might be very valuable. All this, moreover, would have a positive value in ecumenical dialogue.

There could be renewed reflection on the appropriate age for Confirmation. Thought should also be given if in the Latin Church the sequence of Baptism, Confirmation and First Communion must be observed only for adults and not for children. The Latin tradition, which is differentiated from the Eastern tradition by the separation of the celebration of Confirmation from that of Baptism, has a *raison d'être* and a weight. On the other hand, the differences between the two traditions are not of a dogmatic nature. Both traditions, in fact, give a different practical answer to the identical situation of a great number of baptisms of children.

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### **Proposition 14: Eucharist, Catechesis and Formation**

The Eucharist, "mysterium fidei," inscribed in God's Covenant with his People, is the source of inspiration of all proposals of pastoral formation. The latter must present the profound relationship of the Eucharist with all the other sacraments, leading men and women of our time to a new life in Christ. With this objective, well-inculturated catechumenal endeavors will have to be developed, which include the presentation of the doctrinal content and introduction to the spiritual and moral life and to social commitment.

The whole People of God -- bishops and parish priests, according to their specific responsibility -- must be involved in this permanent formation promoted in each [local] Church, especially the faithful who are active in parishes and communities, such as catechists and evangelizers.

Seminarians especially will be given a solid formation in theological, liturgical and pastoral principles of an authentic Eucharistic spirituality. They must understand as well as possible the meaning of each liturgical norm.

Parishes and small communities that are a part of them must be schools of Eucharistic mystagogy. In this context, the cooperation will be sought of communities of consecrated life, of movements and of groups that reappraise,

according to their own charisms, Christian formation.

In the framework of the new evangelization, we acknowledge the need to develop new forms of catechesis appropriate to the different situations and cultures. In this context, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the recent teachings of the Magisterium must be privileged points of reference.

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### **Proposition 15: Family and Sacramental Initiation**

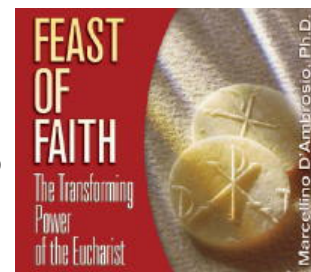
It is necessary to associate the Christian family with the sacramental initiation of children. Access of children to the Eucharistic table must not be limited without a reason. First Communion, above all, is a step of great importance for a life committed to the path of holiness, full of charity, joy and peace. Every family, supported by the parish, the priests, consecrated persons, lay collaborators and, especially, Catholic schools, must foster a process of Eucharistic education.

The Church, family of God, grows and is nourished at the table of the Word of God and of the Body and Blood of Christ. The celebration of the Eucharist must increasingly promote at all levels the awareness and realization of a "Church family" through solidarity, family relations and communion among all the members of the community.

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