Source and Summit

1322   Each time we celebrate the Eucharist,
        we deepen and more perfectly complete
        our own Christian initiation.
    We enter ever more deeply into Christ,
        putting on Christ more fully as a garment,
           living with Christ forever.

1323–24   The great Constitution on the Church
        from Vatican II
        makes this clear in a single, memorable line:
           the Eucharist, it explains simply,
           is "the source and summit
               of the Christian life."
    All the work of the Church—
        and, indeed, the daily life of us Christians—
           directs us toward the Eucharist
           and flows from it.

1325   It is the source of our union together
        as the People of God,
        and it is that thing which forms the Church.

1326–27   It is, you might say,
        an entire summary of our faith
        wrapped up in a single moment
           where Christ acts
           to express God's mercy and love,
           which he revealed in his life and death
           and which is now sustained
               by the Spirit of Love.

Many Names

1328   Because it is so central to us and so rich,
> we give this sacrament many names.

Each name reflects specific dimensions
> of this diamond,
> and in each,
>> we see a slightly different meaning.

The word itself, "Eucharist," comes from the Greek
> and means "thanksgiving."

1329   We also refer to it as "the Lord's Supper"
> because it flows from that famous last supper
> which Jesus shared with his friends.

We call it "the Breaking of Bread"
> because in that last supper, Jesus used the rite
> of breaking and sharing bread,
> a ritual that was common for Jews.

It was again in that rite
> that his disciples recognized him
> after the resurrection,
> and that is the rite around which
>> his early followers gathered,
>> using it to signify their own unity
>> as the body of Christ.

We call it "the Eucharistic assembly"
> because the Eucharist is celebrated in public
>> by the Church assembled.

1330   We refer to the Eucharist as "the memorial
> of the Lord's passion and resurrection,"
>> "the holy sacrifice,"
>> and "the sacrifice of praise."

1331   We call it "holy communion."

1332   We call it "the Mass,"
> by which we refer to its final action,
> which sends us forth to love and serve
> and which was rendered, in Latin,
>> *Ite, missa est.*

> *The word, "Eucharist," comes from the Greek and means "thanksgiving."*

Important Signs

1333   Each and every time we gather faithfully
　　　　to celebrate the Eucharist,
　　　　Christ makes himself present among us
　　　　　　under the signs of bread and wine.
This is the memorial he left us:
　　　　to share this meal
　　　　and in it to recognize his presence.

1334   This reflects our Jewish roots
　　　　because bread and wine were offered
　　　　by early priests to show gratitude to God.
Also, it was unleavened bread that they ate
　　　　on the night of Passover,
　　　　marking their imminent departure
　　　　　　on a journey
　　　　　　during which they were fed
　　　　　　　　with manna.
The cup of blessing
　　　　at the end of the Jewish Passover meal
　　　　was a hopeful and festive action,
　　　　a sign of God's love among them.
In Christ, this blessing cup became a sharing
　　　　in the kingdom of God.
In Christ, this bread became a sharing
　　　　in his dying and rising.

1335–37 Perhaps the most revealing moment
　　　　in Jesus' life came on the night
　　　　of that famous supper,
　　　　when he revealed the depths of his love.
　　　　　　As a servant would do,
　　　　　　he rose from the supper table,
　　　　　　donned an apron,
　　　　　　and washed the feet of his disciples.
In this single act,
　　　　he forcefully revealed that God is love.

1338   Matthew, Mark, and Luke hand on to us
        the account of the breaking of bread,
        while John adds this account of the washing.
    By reading them all, we get the picture clearly:
        Christ has left us a memorial of his love,
        a way to continue to make himself present
            down through the centuries
            under this form.

1339–40 For us, this is a "new Passover,"
        one in which Jesus passes over to his Father,
        one in which we, too, pass over to new life.

1341   This liturgical action
        is more than a mere memory, however,
        for in it, Christ continues to be present,
            forming us in love,
            shaping us as a people,
            loving us to death.

1342   And from the very beginning,
        the followers of Christ have gathered
            for this memorial.

1343   And we gather, too,
        around the entire world,
        saying the same fundamental prayer,
        on the first day of the week.
            It is the center of our lives.

*What does it mean that Jesus served his followers
by washing their feet as he did?*

To what does the Eucharist challenge you?

*How does participating in Mass and weekly communion
set a cadence or pace for your spiritual journey?*