INCULTURATING THE EUCHARIST IN THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF MUTARE,
ZIMBABWE

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that “Inculturating the Eucharist in the Catholic Diocese of Mutare, Zimbabwe” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.
SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to explore possible ways of making the Eucharistic celebration more meaningful to Catholics in Mutare diocese, Zimbabwe. The reason for this concern is that the Eucharist is the ‘source and summit’ of the Christian life. Since inculturation is a possible means of achieving this aim of a meaningful celebration, it was found necessary in this study to examine how the Eucharist has been taught and inculturated in the Catholic Church over the years. From this it was discovered that inculturation was absent in the writings and catechesis of early Church authors and Fathers during the periods reviewed. Although an observation was made that it was indirectly implied in the Eucharistic prayers of the early Christians, it was only after a new ‘understanding of culture’ emerged, following Vatican II, that permission was given by Rome to use local languages at Eucharistic celebrations.

In the course of this study, efforts were made to determine the elements that constitute Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese. These include: symbolic gestures, local languages, proverbs, enthronement, local staple food, invocation of ancestors, and others. In an empirical study to find out the extent of inculturation that has taken place in Mutare diocese, questionnaires were sent to sixteen out of twenty-four parishes in the diocese. Oral interviews were also conducted for this purpose. After analyzing the responses from respondents and those interviewed, it was discovered that some areas of inculturation have been realized, though not fully. Two outstanding areas which have not yet been realized were found to be the use of local staple food and the invocation of ancestors. The conclusion was that inculturation is not fully implemented in Mutare diocese and this impacts negatively on the celebration of the Eucharist. Eucharistic inculturation is an achievable goal in Mutare diocese, however, provided there is intensive catechesis which takes into account Shona-rich cultural values, aided by active involvement of small Christian Communities and the support of the hierarchy.
Key Terms

Ancestors

Catholic Church and Tradition

Catechesis

Enthronement

Eucharist

Eucharistic Prayer

Eucharistic Presence

Family

Inculturation

Liturgy

Memorial

Sacrifice

Smaller Groups (Small Christian Communities)

Solemnities (Christmas and Easter)

Vatican II
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Statement of Problem

The Catholic Church throughout the world has been celebrating the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist for many centuries. Most of the Catholics attend the Eucharistic celebration on Sundays because this is the day on which they are free and also because it is the day the Church celebrates the resurrection of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Hence it is a day of obligation for all to have congregational worship. On the other hand, some members of the Catholic Church try to find time to attend this celebration on a daily basis. The Eucharist is also celebrated daily as a Church custom because it is viewed as an important Sacrament in the life of the Church and its members. The Church’s Official Catechetical Text for the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 refers to the place of the Eucharist, among the other sacraments, as follows:

The Eucharist is not simply one of the Sacraments. It surely belongs to the sacramental economy and cannot be honored to the detriment of Baptism, Confirmation, and Sacramental forgiveness. However, it possesses a unique excellence, as it is the sacrament in which is given not only grace, but also the very author of grace. In this way, the person of Christ is manifested in the most immediate and real manner (Official catechetical text, 1999:13).

Though the Church celebrates the Eucharist daily, many Catholic Christians are not generally aware of what they are celebrating. Cardinal Etchegaray (1999:8) expresses this sentiment vividly when he says: “For twenty centuries, although they celebrate the Eucharist, Christians have never understood it exhaustively. The gift of Jesus is of wealth that has never been plumed.” Granted that Catholics have been celebrating the Eucharist for the past two thousand years, the greatest concern of many, including the present writer, is why most Catholics the world over are not aware of and committed to what they are celebrating. This is a problem, which agitates the mind of the writer.
Putting it differently, one may ask: If the Eucharist is the center of our Christian life, why is it that it has not touched-deeply, totally and entirely, the lives of Catholics---more specifically in Mutare diocese, Zimbabwe? Writing in a broader context, McCabe (1986:7) expresses this same concern in these words: “In the meantime, people continue to worship following inherited practices, but more often than not, the faith reflected in these acts of worship has not taken root and the worship often appears divorced from the people’s daily experience.” This divorce of worship from daily experience reflects the need for inculturation. The full meaning and import of this term are discussed later in chapter two.

Inculturation comes as a necessity because it is expected to help the Catholic faith not only to be deeply rooted in the culture of the people. With reference to Mutare, it is also expected to facilitate the Christianizing of a particular culture, namely the Shona culture. This will make it possible for this culture to give proper witness to the faith of the Shona people. Most Shona people have been Christianized through baptism, but their culture has not been equally Christianized. Consequently, the Catholic community in Mutare diocese experiences a lack of authentic witnessing. This lack is felt at every level of the Church and society. For example, when the faith of many Catholics in Mutare diocese is threatened by serious mishaps, they quickly suspend or abandon their faith so as to seek solutions from fortunetellers—the n’angas. Thus, a two-pronged problem has clearly surfaced. On the one hand, the Christian faith has not yet been deeply rooted in Zimbabwean culture, notably in Mutare diocese; on the other hand, it has not remarkably touched the lives of Catholics in this area, as we shall attempt to demonstrate later in chapters eight and nine.

It must be emphasized at the onset that for the Catholic faith to be deeply rooted in Shona culture, the inculturation of the Eucharist must not be limited to the activities of the Sunday Eucharistic celebration. It must also include those moments in peoples’ lives that are celebrated in the context of the Eucharist and which are central to them. In other words, since the Eucharist is celebrated with most of the other sacraments, such as Holy
Orders, Matrimony and so on, as well as the two great solemnities of Christmas and Easter, the inculturation of the Eucharistic celebration should apply in the context of these sacraments and solemnities. Among other reasons why I intend to focus on the two sacraments of Ordination and Matrimony is because there are few attempts in Mutare diocese to inculturate them during Eucharistic celebrations. It is important to survey more grounds to facilitate their inculturation for a better celebration and an active participation at the Eucharist. Inculturation, in fact, must generally begin with the people who celebrate the Eucharist. Okure (1990:73) points out the significance of this in this way: “Inculturation primarily has to do with transforming people.” For meaningful inculturation to take place, it must be dynamic, embracing and thorough. Failure to take these aspects into cognizance has its repercussions. The editor of Spearhead (1986:v) laments this failure in the implementation of inculturation when he remarks:

Much has been said about inculturation but little done about it, and in most cases implementation has been haphazard due to many reasons. These can be the lack of interest at all levels and ignorance of: culture, inculturation, the liturgy…

This brings us to the immediate problems facing this study namely:

(i) Systematic and practical implementation of the process of inculturation in the Eucharist is lacking in our parishes and diocese.

(ii) There is a lack of proper catechesis on the Eucharist especially on the part of parishioners. That is, the method of catechizing is not adequate to equip them properly with the practical knowledge of the Eucharist and inculturation.

(iii) Finally, there is a form of rigid conformity to tradition and the status quo in the Catholic Church as a whole, which fails to take sufficiently into account the present day spiritual needs of the people.

In effect, there will be two perspectives to this study. It will first examine those areas of the liturgy which are already inculturated in Mutare diocese so as to find out how effectively inculturation has been implemented.
Secondly, the study will also consider those other aspects of the liturgy which are yet to be inculturated in Mutare diocese. The writer intends to use some of his pastoral experience to demonstrate how some of the problems mentioned above have manifested themselves in his ministry as a Catholic priest. In this sense, the desire to undertake this research is born out of personal interest and experience. It arises as a personal interest because this is the Sacrament which I celebrate everyday in my life. It is, therefore, very important for me to devote more time to study it in detail so as to be much more aware of what I am celebrating as well as to be able to help, guide and direct those under my pastoral care to understand and appreciate what they participate in celebrating. It is also a way of expressing some of my pastoral concerns, the thought of which continues to disturb me and to which I earnestly seek solutions in the subject of inculturation.

As a young, newly ordained and inexperienced Catholic priest I once, in 1987, excluded some youths from participation at a mid-night Vigil Mass because of their lack of understanding and reverence of the Holy Eucharist. This lack of understanding was obviously a reflection of lack of proper catechesis on their part. They had not been provided with a proper understanding of the significance of the Holy Eucharist and how it was to be celebrated well through meaningful and active participation. This disturbing experience of mine is one of the prime factors which motivate me to embark on this research. In order to prevent such a mistake and similar problems from recurring in future, there is need to look for solutions which can partly be found through inculturation. The solutions which I envisage that the inculturation of the Eucharist would offer in Mutare diocese include: a lively celebration of the Eucharist; an active participation of all present at Mass, including children; and a sound catechesis on the Eucharist. This research partly tries to examine how these solutions, as well as others, would be effected through the process of inculturation.

My desire to embark on this research has also gained even more inspiration from the fact that the late Pope John Paul II published his last encyclical on the subject of the
Eucharist, entitled *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*. This encyclical will, it is hoped, together with other available sources, help to throw more light on the subject of this study.

Many studies have been conducted separately on the subjects of inculturation and the Eucharist. However, not much has been done to combine both subjects in order to make the celebration of the Eucharist more meaningful to people in their different cultural settings, especially in Mutare diocese. One of the notable exceptions includes a UNISA doctoral thesis by Sithembele Sipuka (2000), who wrote specifically on inculturating the sacrifice of the Mass---which incorporates the Eucharist---in a comparative study. Another comparative study on the inculturation of the Eucharistic sacrifice was done in 1989 by Gakpe-Ntsri. The present research is not a comparative study, except insofar as it briefly compares the Eucharistic celebration before Vatican II and present-day Eucharistic celebration. Chiromba, a Zimbabwean priest in the diocese where this research is based, wrote in 1988 on the mystery of the Holy Eucharist in the Shona cultural situation. Chiromba’s study focuses more on the mystery of the Eucharist with little emphasis on its inculturation.

Though there are similarities in the three works cited and this present study in that they all treat the Eucharist and inculturation to some extent, this study differs in a significant way from the other two. In the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese, the effort toward inculturation includes the activities during the Sunday Eucharistic celebration; the Eucharistic celebration of the two great solemnities of the Church, namely Christmas and Easter; and the Eucharistic celebrations of the joyful moments in the lives of those celebrating. These aspects in the celebration of the Eucharist not only make it meaningful, but they also help to involve people in the promotion and implementation of inculturation in Mutare diocese. On the other hand, the comparative studies on the Eucharistic sacrifice in the writings of Sipuka and Ntsri focus more on how the understanding of sacrifice could help the Xhosa and the Akans to understand better the inculturated Eucharist.
1.2 Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate possible ways of inculturating the Eucharist so that it can become meaningful and useful to the lives of Zimbabwean Catholics. By inculturation of the Eucharist, I mean that effort or process which makes it possible for the Eucharist to become part and parcel of the life of those who celebrate it. In other words, it is a process of making Eucharistic celebration meaningful to Catholics in Mutare, based on their cultural view and understanding of life. It is necessary to make the celebration of the Eucharist meaningful to our people because, although it is the center of our Christian worship as Catholics, many of them do not understand what they are celebrating when participating in it. In his comment on the back-cover of the book entitled, *Catholics and the Eucharist*, Weinandy (2000) observes: “Vatican II stressed that the Eucharist is the summit of Catholic liturgical worship, yet many Catholics do not fully grasp or appreciate its significance.” Thus, while we try to explore ways of presenting the Catholic understanding of the Eucharist theoretically, we shall also endeavour to suggest ways of celebrating it practically through the application of our cultural values in order to make it meaningful to Catholics in Mutare Diocese.

This study, therefore, makes an effort to help Catholics in Mutare Diocese not only understand what they celebrate, but also to appreciate it fully. It also aims at finding ways to arrive at solutions to problems similar to those described above. For example, in order to tackle the problem regarding lack of proper catechesis on the Eucharist, the study reviews the Church’s approach to catechesis, its method and the language used by the Church in teaching so as to determine whether these means of imparting religious knowledge are appropriate and adequate. To this effect, chapter six focuses on the Church’s teaching on the Eucharist. Inculturation enables us to suggest practical methods of catechesis which take into consideration the peoples’ culture and background. By so doing, a proper catechesis goes a long way to help them better understand the meaning of the Eucharist.
In order to achieve our purpose as stated above it is necessary to study some of the various teachings of the Catholic Church on the Eucharist, from early Christian times till Vatican II (The Second Vatican Council of the Catholic Church). This is also the task of chapter six. The study also explores the Church’s teaching on the Eucharistic sacrifice, as well as the Zimbabwean understanding of sacrifice, in order to co-relate the two understandings. Questionnaires and face-to-face interviews have been used to facilitate this exploration and co-relation. This is the task of chapter nine. In other words, it is considered possible to use what the people know culturally to help them understand fully what they believe and practice as Christians. However, it is in chapter seven, in part, that the importance of Eucharistic sacrifice will be explored. In effect, the study aims not only at communicating the basic understanding of the inculturation of the Eucharist to Catholics, but also at exploring practical means of inculturating it in the Catholic Diocese of Mutare. In this way it hopes to make the celebration of the Eucharist more interesting, attractive, meaningful and permanent in the lives of the Zimbabwean Catholics. Chapter nine helps to achieve this aim.

1.3 Method
To give effect to the present research, the method of approach adopted is important. Lonergan’s (1972:xii) definition of method is as follows: “Method is not a set of rules to be followed meticulously by a dot. It is a framework for collaborative creativity. It would outline the various clusters of operations to be performed by theologians when they go about their various tasks.” I would like to outline here those “clusters of operations” that can help us carry out this research effectively. A two-pronged approach will be followed, namely, (a) method of research and (b) method of presentation.

1.3.1 Method of Research
In the method of research, I intend to use:

i) Literature Review.

ii) A questionnaire Study
iii) Oral Interviews and

iv) Personal Experiences.

i) Literature Review

According to Prof. Vakalisa (1999:38), “Literature study [review] is the focused attempt to get more familiar with what has been said and done on your problem area from documented information.” Literature review, in effect, involves general reading on the subject, such as consulting related books, dissertations and theses presented at theological institutions and universities, journal articles, conference proceedings, among other sources. In view of this, I will survey the origin, application and significance of inculturation from biblical and Church sources, specifically as they relate to the Eucharist. I shall also examine the origin of the Eucharist in the Gospels and Paul’s letter to the Corinthians, as well as the teachings of the Catholic Church on the subject from the early Christian period, especially in the writings of some Church Fathers, to the teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

ii) Questionnaire Study

A questionnaire study is the sampling of peoples’ opinions on a specified topic with the help of formulated questions. In this thesis, the questionnaire study targets such people as priests, catechists, a section of the members of the congregation, as well as small groups of children (vaparidzi vadiki), Christian mothers (chita chavana amai), and Christian fathers (chita chavana baba). Separate questions are formulated and administered to each of these groups. It is important for these groups of people to be included in the questionnaire study because the inculturation referred to here concerns them and, above all, they live and celebrate the Eucharist. The importance of the questionnaire study is in that:

- It makes it possible for us to reach as many people as possible, especially at the grassroots.
• It helps to complement whatever information is received from the literature review.
• It helps to lead the writer to more rounded conclusions based on the context of the people.

iii) Oral Interviews

In addition to the questionnaire study, some people, who may not be available for the questionnaire study but whose experiences are vital and important to this investigation, are approached individually and asked to share their experience verbally. These oral interviews are important for our study because they will help us to correlate the information gathered through previous methods.

iv) Personal Experience

My personal experience will also play an important role in contributing to this study because the celebration of the Eucharist is an activity that involves a personal commitment on the part of a Catholic priest. It is said that one learns through experience. Here is one of the possible areas where the writer can make a personal contribution by way of sharing his or her experience and making suggestions for contextual relevance and improvement.

1.3.2 Method of Presentation

The method of presentation in this study will be exploratory, historical, analytical, descriptive and critical.

i) Exploratory

As I have said earlier, efforts are made to find out what Mutare Catholics want in their journey of faith and life so as to know how to celebrate the Eucharist in a way suitable to their cultural set up. This calls for a concerted effort to explore ways of celebrating the Eucharist in a way that makes it lively and meaningful to them. This study is exploratory
in the sense that some effort will be made to find out how inculturation has been practiced in neighbouring countries, like ‘Democratic Republic of Congo’ (DRC), where the Zairian Mass is well inculturated. In this way, the religious authorities in Mutare diocese will learn from their counterparts in DRC how Eucharistic inculturation can become successful. Taking into consideration cultural differences between the Shona and the Zairian people, in particular, Mutare diocese will explore its own similar cultural values that will promote Eucharistic inculturation in the diocese. This exploratory approach is important because:

• It will enable us to know the context and the cultural set up in which Catholics operate.
• It will enable us to know areas that need more emphasis or change.
• It will help us to discover new grounds and even new methods with the help of other people.

ii) Historical

The historical approach will facilitate an in-depth examination of the Church’s teachings on the Eucharist in some of the Church Councils, especially the Council of Trent and also in the doctrines of some Fathers of the Church. It will enable us to examine various trends of events and developments in the history of the Eucharist and to identify traces of inculturation in this history. This reference to history is important because, according to Torquil (1990:2), “without a constant dialogue with the historical, the Eucharist, as an ahistorical medium, can become allied to the dominant forces of society and become a means of oppression.” The Eucharist is meant to give life, hope, joy, and above all, to bring healing to those who celebrate it. That is why it must be inculturated, specifically in Mutare diocese.

iii) Analytical

The study will try to analyze every situation presented to us by our historical findings as well as the responses we obtain from the questionnaire study and the oral interviews. In this way we shall be able to determine which information is relevant for inclusion in the
findings of the study. The analytical approach is important, therefore, because it guides us in our selection, use and application of information.

iv) Descriptive

The study will describe some of the various developments that took place from the time that Jesus established the Eucharist at the Last Supper till our present time. It will also describe the intended outcome of the research findings for the Catholic Church in general and Mutare diocese in particular.

v) Critical

In its critical aspect, the study will seek to determine whether the present method of celebrating the Eucharist in the Catholic Church is still meaningful and helpful to Catholics. It is hoped that self-criticism will be an important tool particularly for the Church in Mutare diocese, which is in need of extensive restructuring. Inculturation is not only needed for the meaningful celebration of the Eucharist, but it is also relevant for measuring whether Mutare diocese is up to date when compared to any other Catholic diocese in twenty-first century Christianity.

1.4 Importance of the Study

The study will, it is hoped, not only make a valuable contribution to Eucharistic inculturation in the Church in Zimbabwe and its institutions of higher learning, especially the major seminaries; but it will also be a useful guide for the Catholic Church in Africa as a whole. The research findings will, accordingly, be made available to the Zimbabwean Catholic Bishops Conference, an organ through which they may be published and circulated throughout the Church in Zimbabwe. The writer also hopes to impart the knowledge obtained from this study to seminarians through lectures and seminars, as well as through making the thesis available in seminary libraries. He further intends to share his findings with priests, religious men and women, and Catholics generally during religious retreats and workshops. It is also hoped that the study will be
found worthy of publication. Above all, the research aims to benefit the Church at the grass roots by recommending a meaningful approach to an inculturated Eucharistic celebration.

1.5 **Scope and Limitations**

This study is limited to Zimbabwe in general and Mutare Diocese in particular. However, reference will also be made to the wider African Church and to African culture as well. The primary focus of the study is on Catholics and their ways of celebrating the Holy Eucharist. There are two main reasons for choosing Mutare Diocese for this study. In the first place, the writer has been working in this diocese as a missionary priest for the past seventeen years. Secondly, there is a great need for the Church to build up a solid pastoral approach in this diocese. The study aims to be a step in this direction. Another limitation of the study is that Zimbabwe, in general, and Mutare Diocese, in particular, do not have relevant sources on the subject under investigation, that is, sources to be used for reference purposes. Most of the available literature was written for Western countries and for other African contexts. An effort will be made in this study, however, to consider how some of the available information on inculturation of the Eucharist can be applied to the Zimbabwean context.

The writer will also depend more on questionnaires and oral interviews for local information, which have their limitations. Both these methods often lack accuracy and precision. All the same, an effort will be made to attain as much accuracy of information as possible, especially from the people whose lives are touched by the Eucharist and its celebration. These people are in a better position to make recommendations on how the Eucharist is to be inculturated. In the thinking of Okure (1990:103), inculturation “cannot…be artificially induced, but needs to flow spontaneously from the personal [and communal] faith of the people, expressed with the symbols and institutions of their own particular culture.”
1.6 Procedure

This last section of this chapter highlights the procedure of the whole work, explaining the activities to be followed from one chapter to another. The research is made up of ten chapters in all. Chapter one, as seen in the preceding sections, addresses the problem at stake; it states the purpose and importance of the study, and specifies its method and scope. It is in this chapter that the reader is made aware of the trend of thought and expectations of the research. This chapter encapsulates the whole research plan because it explains the direction to be followed.

Chapter two not only discusses the meaning and relevance of inculturation, but also gives its definitions and those of other related concepts. Inculturation is not studied in isolation. It is necessary for us to examine other terms related to it in order to see how they compare with it in meaning. Such terms include, adaptation, contextualization, indigenization, enculturation, acculturation, and incarnation. Each of these terms will be explained to reveal its significance in the current context. The scope and agents of inculturation are also fully discussed in this chapter.

Chapter three addresses some of the present challenges facing inculturation in the celebration of the Eucharist. The Church of the third millennium has many challenges, which need to be addressed. She cannot close her eyes to problems like famine, hunger, war, justice and peace in society. An inculturated Eucharist enables its celebrants to assess these problems as a community. Other sub-themes of this chapter include reformulating the Eucharistic symbols, the use of African staple food, invocation of African ancestors at Mass and the Eucharist in the context of the African family. It is hoped that inculturation has much to contribute in addressing these challenges. The discussion of these challenges will lead us to chapter four, which is concerned primarily with the meaning of culture. This chapter examines in detail the concepts and definitions of culture. It also tries to examine the dynamism of culture by taking a closer look at culture as praxis and culture as communication. Cultural symbolism is also another important aspect of the chapter. This is because the place of symbols in community
worship is of paramount importance. Chapter four and the preceding ones prepare us for the second and central part of the study, beginning with chapter five.

The central theme of chapter five is the Eucharist as found in the New Testament. The aim is to examine the origin, meaning and celebration of the Eucharist in the light of some cultural values such as language, gestures and symbols in order to highlight not only its significance in the life of Christians but also its necessity to Christianity as a whole. Jesus’ actions at the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper will be examined so as to find out how these actions could help in the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. Chapter five also aims at laying the foundation for solid catechesis on the Eucharist, which will be continued in chapters six and seven respectively.

Chapter six considers the various Church teachings on the Eucharist. In these teachings, I try to find out if there are any attempts made by the Church at Eucharistic inculturation. An attempt is also made to see how these Church teachings relate to the needs of inculturation in Mutare diocese. The main sources to be examined include, the Didache, the writings of early Church Fathers like Justine Martyr, Hippolytus of Rome, Ambrose and Augustine. Chapter seven proceeds to examine the various aspects of the Eucharist, which include the Eucharist as sacrifice, as memorial, as a life-giving meal and as thanksgiving. The chapter finally tries to relate these aspects to inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. Chapter eight discusses the constitutive elements of Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese. In this chapter, the geographical position of Mutare diocese in Zimbabwe is explained. The aim of the chapter is primarily to prepare the ground for a fuller discussion of the implementation of inculturation in chapter nine. In chapter eight I also examine how the Catholic Church has traditionally celebrated the Eucharist during solemnities and other joyful occasions that sometimes involve the whole congregation and at other times smaller groups of people.
Chapter nine gives a thorough analysis and evaluation of the attempts made so far to inculturate the Eucharist, especially in Mutare diocese. Responses from the questionnaires and oral interviews are also analyzed, interpreted and discussed to see how these attempts to inculturate the Eucharist have helped Catholics in Mutare Diocese. The analysis and interpretation provide information for an evaluation of the status of inculturation with regard to the Eucharist. Through this evaluation it will be possible to determine the progress made so far, the areas that need further attention and improvement, and the type of help that is needed to inculturate the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. Finally, chapter ten gives the summary of each chapter and brings the study to a close with a general conclusion.

1.7 Conclusion
The first step of solving a problem is by identifying its causes. This introductory chapter has helped to highlight the problem at stake in this research. It also states the purpose, the method, its importance and limitations. It goes on to explain the procedure where the activities to be followed are outlined. In a nutshell, it preempts the possible outcomes of the other chapters. Photos, map and pie chart are inserted in some chapters for meaningful illustrations. Chapter one is important because it lays the foundation on which the whole research is built.
CHAPTER 2

INCULTURATION: ITS MEANING AND RELEVANCE

2.1 Introduction
The question of inculturation has received much attention in the Catholic Church in recent years, to the extent that it has even been given special consideration by some of the Popes, especially Pope John Paul II. In his preface to *Inculturation: Its meaning and urgency*, McGarry (1986:7) remarks that “so central does Pope John Paul II consider the question of inculturation for the mission of the Church at the present time, that in 1982 he established at the Vatican a Pontifical Council for culture.” In order to demonstrate how inculturation has been popularized in our present time, Shorter (1997:xi) remarks: “The last ten years have seen a growing number of articles, working papers and even official statements on aspects of inculturation, after the stimulus of the 1974 Synod of Bishops and the Synodal document…”

When we talk of inculturation, we are also talking about culture, which is central to the Christian faith. Pope John Paul II maintains, “A faith which does not become culture is a faith which has not been fully received, not thoroughly thought through, not fully lived out” (see Waliggo et al 1986:7). In other words, there is a close link between faith and culture. Hence, the need for inculturation of the Gospel has to be emphasized. This is especially so in Zimbabwe, where Christianity is relatively young and needs to be deeply rooted in Zimbabwean culture. The need for inculturation of the Christian faith is summed up by Schineller (1990: back-cover page) in these words: “Wherever the Gospel is lived, wherever it is preached, we are obliged to search for ways in which the Good-News can be more deeply lived, celebrated and shared. This process is inculturation.” This statement is correct and it is in line with my primary aim in carrying out this research. The aim is to find out ways of making the Eucharistic celebration more meaningful in the lives of Catholics here in Mutare. In this chapter, therefore, I intend to examine briefly the meaning of inculturation by looking at the various terminologies associated with it.
It is necessary to adopt some working definitions of the subject, to review its scope, examine its agents, explore ways of inculturating the Christian faith—with particular reference to Mutare diocese—and later to trace the place of inculturation in the New Testament as well as in the Church’s teachings. The chapter not only highlights the meaning of inculturation, but it also emphasizes the relevance of an inculturated Eucharist for Mutare diocese.

2.2 The Meaning of Inculturation
The first step towards exploring the meaning of inculturation is to examine what some authors and researchers have said about it. Authors like Waliggo and others (1986:11), Schineller (1990:6), and Shorter (1997:xi) agree that “inculturation” as a term is relatively recent. For Waliggo, however, “the reality it signifies has been present in various degrees in the Church since its foundation” (Waliggo et al. 1986:11). Because of this relative newness of the term, I intend to explore its meaning and that of the concept inculturation gradually. The aim here is to understand its meaning well so that its discussion may become clear as the study progresses. In emphasizing the importance of understanding this term, Shorter (1997:4) explains: “The purpose is simply to establish meanings and ensure that we know what we are talking about.” It is hoped that the meaning of the word and concept of inculturation will unfold as we review the various terminologies associated with it. Waliggo (Waliggo et al. 1986:11) observe: “There has been a noticeable development in our understanding of the inculturation movement and this can clearly be shown by the passage from one terminology to another.” These terminologies are examined below in order to see not only how they relate to inculturation, but also how they can help us to understand it.

2.2.1 Adaptation
The first terminology to be examined in order to facilitate the understanding of inculturation is the word ‘adaptation’. Schineller (1990:16) tells us that “to adapt is to make fit”. Waliggo explains what this “make fit” implies in this instance: “It implies a selection of certain rites and customs, purifying them and inserting them with Christian rituals where there was an apparent similarity” (Waliggo et al. 1986:11).
Many authors, like Pinto, Schineller and Waliggo, agree that the term “adaptation” was widely used in the past. This is true because it also appeared in three articles of the “Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” (Sacrosanctum Concilium) of the documents of Vatican II. It has been observed that, among the three articles (38, 39 and 40), adaptation appeared more prominently in article 40. This article states: “In some places and circumstances—an even more radical adaptation of the liturgy is needed…” (Sacrosanctum Concilium 1966, No. 40). Though the document does not specify what this radical adaptation implies, it makes a provision that encourages local bishops to make thorough studies of their cultures for possible adaptation of the Christian faith to them. Local bishops’ Conferences are empowered to use their discretion to select those aspects of culture and traditions of the people that are suitable for adaptation. It is not necessary to specify here any aspect of a particular culture because cultures and circumstances differ from place to place.

Pope John Paul II not only approved of the term adaptation, but he also supported the Church’s position on its use when he states: “An adaptation of the Christian life in the fields of pastoral, ritual, didactic and spiritual activities is not only possible, it is even favored by the Church” (see Schineller 1990:17). From all indications, therefore, we can say that the process of adaptation was accepted and approved by African Catholics and missionaries at a certain time. Later, however, this term lost its appeal because it was found wanting. It fell short of expectations. The dissatisfaction with it came when African Catholics sensed that it was not only inadequate but also a subtle form of imposition on them. Viewing it in this way, Sipuka (2000:240) asserts: “It selects only those customs that can make sense to the Roman liturgical rite without changing its structure and content.” While Pinto (1985:9) holds that “it expresses the external aspect of the encounter between Christian faith and the different cultures”, Shorter gives us a more detailed explanation why the term is unacceptable. According to Shorter (1975:150), “The word adaptation cannot help but convey an activity that is peripheral, non-essential—even superficial.” African Catholics see the term as an imposition because it has no room for dialogue between the Christian faith and local culture. It is not a surprise, therefore, that in 1974 in Rome the African Bishops not only declared it out-
dated but also rejected it out-rightly. This rejection spurred African hierarchies to look for a term that would imply dialogue between their culture and the Christian faith.

2.2.2 Contextualization
The next term to be examined in the effort to understand the meaning of inculturation is ‘contextualization.’ The term contextualization in theology is used to refer mainly to the situation or context in which the Gospel is to be proclaimed. Referring to this context, Pinto (1985:10) affirms: “Context is the sum-total of the significant circumstances.” In a way, the emphasis on the context may not concretely involve the culture. That is, it does not address culture directly. This prompts Schineller (1990:19) to remark: “Instead of speaking of a particular culture, whether traditional or modern, it speaks of contexts or situations into which the Gospel must be inculturated.” Since the emphasis here is on the context instead of culture, Schineller (1990:19) points out one imminent danger, namely that of “overemphasizing the present context to the detriment of continuity with the past.” Schineller has a point here because any theology that emphasizes the present without an adequate consideration of the past may not have a strong base. Thus, a good blending of the past, the present and even the future always yields a better result. The difference between ‘context’ and ‘culture’ is apparent. While ‘culture’ refers to the total way of life of human beings, ‘context’ refers to a specific situation or environment.

Though contextualization does not address culture directly, and consequently is not a proper synonym for inculturation, it created some form of awareness. It reminds us that situations are not necessarily the same in terms of the preaching of the Gospel. Thus, every particular context calls for creative theological reflection. What works in Europe may not work in Africa. Even in Africa, what works in Egypt may not work in Zimbabwe. For this reason, Schineller (1990:19) advises: “One must again and again study the situation and contextualize the Gospel for that situation as it changes.” The present Zimbabwean context needs theological inculturation in this way in order to make the Christian faith more permanent.
2.2.3 Indigenization.
The third terminology leading to the understanding of inculturation is the word ‘indigenization.’ In the 1970s, the term “indigenization” was coined from the word “indigenous”. As it is used in this context this term refers to the process of conferring on Christian worship that cultural form which is native to the local community. Explaining the meaning of indigenization, Schineller (1990:18) contends: “The indigenization of theology means that the local community, with its own indigenous leadership, has the primary responsibility and task of developing the teaching, the liturgy and the practice of that local Church.” This means that at a certain stage in the growth of a local church and the development of its theology, the help of the foreign missionary may be needed. For the most part, however, the bulk of the work is to be done by the indigenous people themselves. In his own contribution toward this end, Chupungco (1992:17) urges that “in imitation of Christ, who by virtue of the incarnation made himself one with the Jewish nation, the local Church should strive to identify itself with the people among whom it dwells.” One practical sign of the indigenization of the local Church is the presence of the local clergy. The inherent danger of indigenization which Schineller (1990:18) foresees is that “it might result in too static a view of culture”. That is, indigenization may not leave room for any communication among cultures.

While Schineller talks of the inherent danger posed by indigenization, Chupungco questions the criteria for determining an indigenous culture. Expressing this concern, Chupungco (1992:16) asks:

Another difficulty presented by the term “indigenization” is the question of determining which elements constitute indigenous culture. How many nations in the world today can claim to be in possession of a culture that has no admixture of other cultures?

Crollius (1986:33), in his article “Inculturation, Newness and Ongoing Process”, explains why indigenization was rejected by some theologians. He remarks, “The term indigenization was rejected, because in some languages, indigenization and its cognates have all too restricted meaning.” Though indigenization helps to promote local
leadership, it can also result in a situation where it excludes other cultures and missionaries that are necessary in contributing to inculturation, as we shall see later. Since culture is dynamic and changes constantly, indigenization should not exclude other cultures completely because there is need for the local culture to grow through interaction with other cultures.

2.2.4 Enculturation

Another term that has significance in our subject is “enculturation.” Pinto and Schineller refer to “enculturation” as an anthropological term, while Shorter says it is a sociological concept. Pinto suggests that as an anthropological concept, enculturation was probably introduced by the anthropologist MJ Herskovits. Confirming Herskovits’s definition, Pinto (1985:11) notes: “Learning experience, which marks humans off from other creatures and by means of which initially and in later life, they achieve competence in their culture, may be called enculturation.” This means that enculturation is a process through which a person is introduced to the culture of his/her society. The process of learning one’s society’s culture can be formal or informal. Shorter (1997:5) maintains, “To a great extent the individual teaches himself [herself] through a process of adaptive learning, the rules of which are given by society.”

Sometimes authors use the words enculturation and inculturation interchangeably. However, Schineller tells us that the two words are different. Making this distinction, Schineller (1990:22) observes: “Inculturation is not the same as enculturation, because in the case of inculturation, the Christian does not come empty-headed, but has a specific tradition to bring to the new situation.” On the other hand, the individual who may be learning his/her culture for the first time is open to learn every aspect of this culture. Enculturation is important to our study of inculturation because it enables an individual to know his or her culture so as to be able to dialogue well with a new culture or religion. In other words, enculturation is fundamental in the process of learning one’s culture, which in turn enables one to appreciate other peoples’ cultures. Readiness to appreciate other peoples’ cultures must be emphasized because it helps to promote inculturation.
2.2.5 Acculturation

Another term related to inculturation is ‘acculturation.’ Both Dhavamony and Pinto agree that acculturation is synonymous with “culture-contact.” However, Dhavamony (1997:28) goes on to elaborate that: “Culture-contact is the phrase preferred by the British anthropologists to the American acculturation.” In this regard, some writers think that acculturation and inculturation are the same. Shorter, however, prefers to describe the two terms as closely associated. According to him (1997:6), this association is so close, “in fact, that [acculturation] is sometimes confused with [inculturation], and it is difficult to know whether authors think the terms are interchangeable.” But the two terms are not exactly the same. The definitions below may highlight the difference between them.

In his definition, Shorter (1997:7) writes: “By acculturation is meant the encounter between one culture and another, or the encounter between cultures.” This contact often brings about cultural change or adjustment. The definition found in Dhavamony (1997:28) emphasizes such change in these words:

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena, which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups. Under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture-change, of which it is but one aspect, and assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation…

From these definitions, we can say that acculturation is a necessary condition for inculturation because acculturation makes it possible for two cultures to come into contact. That is, acculturation facilitates the communication between cultures. Schineller (1990:22) points out one important difference between acculturation and inculturation, saying: “And the process of inculturation as we will see, calls not only for contact but for insertion.” This means that inculturation goes beyond culture contact because it inserts new meaning into the culture in order to transform it so as to bring about new creation. Pinto’s observation on acculturation is equally worthy of note. Pinto (1985:10) observes that “acculturation implies an element of aggressiveness and does not convey the aspects
of dialogue and mutual fusion”. His observation is important because in these encounters between cultures, an effort must be made to see that no culture dominates another because no culture is superior to another. In other words, the dialogue between two cultures must be mutual. Acculturation is important to our understanding of inculturation, therefore, because when one culture encounters another culture in a mutual relationship and not on the basis of domination, both cultures are enriched.

There is need for cultures to come into contact because culture is dynamic, not static. Shorter (1997:8) is right when he informs the Catholic Church, which applies equally to Mutare diocese, that: “Acculturation, the communication between cultures on a footing of mutual respect and tolerance, is a necessary condition of Catholicism, of a Church that claims to be universal.” From these clarifications, it becomes clear that the initial culture contact between the Western (missionary) and Shona cultures was not on a mutual basis. The former dominated the latter, and this explains why the proper understanding of the meaning of inculturation in this chapter is very important. Such an understanding will help us to take a bold step in working toward the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese.

2.2.6 Incarnation

Of equal significance in the understanding of inculturation is the term “incarnation.” Schineller (1990:20) describes “incarnation” as “the most directly theological word to express the meaning of inculturation”. Dhavamony (1997:95) calls it “the archetype of inculturation of the Gospel.”

The origin of the word “incarnation” is reflected in John 1:14 in the words, “The word became flesh and dwelt among us”. Sipuka (2000:241) gives a beautiful illustration of incarnation in the following lines:

Through incarnation, God in Jesus Christ was able to exist, act and speak in human form. The event, according to the Christian faith, took place in history at a particular place, i.e. Palestine and in a particular culture, i.e. Jewish culture. Jesus weaved himself into the
culture of the Jews and through it communicated, ritualized and effected the salvation he had brought.

We can say, in effect, that incarnation refers to the entire Christ-event. This includes the coming, birth, growth, daily life and struggle, teaching, healing, celebrating, suffering, dying and rising of Jesus Christ. In general, we are saying that Jesus was not only born into this culture, but he also learnt the language and customs of his people through which he expressed the truth and love of God to his followers. In short, Shorter (1997:80) maintains: “He accepts human cultures and expresses himself through them. He lives their way of life.” For Shorter (1997:80), this action of Jesus is important because, “There could have been no earthly ministry for Jesus if he had not adopted the cultural concepts, symbols and behaviour of his hearers.”

It is important, however, to point out here that Jesus was not just a passive recipient of the culture into which he was born. In some cases he challenged the culture of his people. His ability to challenge some of the traditions and customs of the Jews brought him into conflict with the Scribes and Pharisees. The incarnation-model is important in our study of inculturation because it gives one basic principle for us to follow. That is, as Jesus incarnated himself firmly in the Jewish culture, in the same way the Church, which is the body of Christ, must incarnate the gospel of Christ in all the cultures of the people to whom it is preached. This principle of incarnating the Gospel into the culture of the people is important to the universal Church, especially in Africa (and Mutare in particular), because it is through this process that the Gospel will be rooted in the life of the people. The document of Vatican II, the decree on the Church’s missionary activity, has an important advise in this respect:

If the Church is to be in a position to offer all men [and women] the mystery of salvation and the life brought by God, then it must implant itself among all groups in the same way that Christ by his incarnation committed himself to the particular social and cultural circumstances of the [people] among whom he lived (Ad Gentes 1966, No.10).
What we have discussed so far regarding the concept of incarnation in relation to inculturation is significant in the sense that inculturation is a possible way to represent and re-live Jesus’ incarnation, which belongs exclusively to him. This prompts Pinto (1985:10) to remark: “Though primary incarnation is that of Jesus Christ, yet we could speak of ‘incarnation’ to signify inculturation by way of an intrinsic analogy, which is proper.” Incarnation is not only important because it is linked to inculturation, but it is also much more important because it applies to Jesus.

Hence, in his concluding remark Dhavamony (1997:95) succinctly remarks: “By reason of incarnation the whole human activity as such and culture are elevated to a dignity beyond compare in the measure in which we know that the word of God has assumed mystically all the cultures in his humanity.” In effect, the incarnational-model of inculturation reminds us of the importance of integrating the Gospel into the culture of a particular Christian community in such a way that the Gospel is expressed vividly through the culture.

I trust that this step by step examination of the above terminologies will help us to understand not only the meaning of inculturation but also to appreciate the significant role it plays in the establishment of Christian faith in a particular culture. Since we have examined these terms and how they relate to inculturation, we can now try to examine the definition of inculturation itself.

2.3 Definitions of Inculturation
It is now appropriate for us to consider some of the definitions of inculturation. It is not my intention, however, to examine all the definitions that have been given by scholars so far. Instead, I will discuss only a few of these for reference purposes in the course of this study. Crollius (1986:43) describes inculturation as:

The integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people, in such a way that this experience not only expresses itself in elements of this
culture, but becomes a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal.

In this statement, Crollius refers to some salient points on which inculturation is based. In the first place, “the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people” is important because inculturation must affect the whole life of the people at the local Church. This Christian experience of the people can be summed up as their life experience, which includes the way they worship, marry, interact with one another, their general occupation, the way they rejoice when they have good fortunes such as a new birth and how they mourn when they have misfortunes such as bereavement in the family.

This integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the culture of its people is also important because, in the words of Pope Paul VI (see Okure 1990:59), inculturation here has become “a process by which Christ becomes ‘native to or incarnated in’ particular African cultures.” In other words, without this integration of the Christian experience into the culture of its people, in the words of Okure (1990:59), “Christ remains an outsider or a foreigner to the culture, he does not become a citizen; and then the culture itself cannot be said to be redeemed by him.” In his definition, Crollius (1986:43) raises another salient point that talks of creating “a new unity and communion not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal.” The aim of inculturation is not to sever the relationship between the local Church and the universal Church. Rather, an inculturated local Church enriches the universal Church with her cultural values transmitted through inculturation. I regard this contribution of Crollius as a good foresight. It forestalls the fears of those people who think that inculturation will bring division in the Church by assuring them that, instead, it will bring about the expected unity between the local Church and the universal Church. Another definition of inculturation comes from Arrupe, the former Superior General of the Jesuits. In a widely quoted definition, Arrupe (see Schineller 1990:6) says:
Inculturation is an incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming and remaking it so as to bring about “a new creation.”

This definition has a strong foundation in the sense that it ultimately goes back to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, that is, “The word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:14). Okure (1990:57) also emphasizes the importance of incarnation in inculturation when she affirms:

Genuine inculturation should be based upon the mystery of the incarnation, seen not only as a mystery and as an event in the person of Jesus of Nazareth; but as a process to be carried on in history till the end of time. Thus our understanding of the mystery of the incarnation should serve as the solid foundation for understanding inculturation.

The Christian message referred to by Arrupe and Crollius means that the complete revelation of God to his people culminates in the person of Jesus Christ. According to Pinto (1985:13), revelation means “the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man [and woman], which is made clear to us in Christ…” There is need, therefore, to incarnate or insert this Christian message or experience into Shona culture, for example, in Mutare diocese. This is the dynamism of inculturation. As Pinto (1985:13) rightly points out: “In short, inculturation is the dynamic relation between the Christian message and diverse cultures, an insertion of the Christian life into a culture…” When this Christian message is well incarnated into the culture of a particular people, Christ’s transforming power is realized and it becomes visible in what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17: “So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away.”

It is equally important to consider the definition given by Waliggo. In his article entitled, ‘Making a Church that is truly African’, Waliggo (Waliggo et al. 1986:12) describes inculturation thus:
It is the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and his message of salvation evermore understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought patterns of each people. It is the conviction that Christ and his Good News are even dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people. It is the continuous endeavour to make Christianity truly “feel at home” in the culture of each people.

This definition is relevant to our topic. In the first place, Waliggo’s idea of inculturation as reformulating the Christian life and doctrine into the very thought-patterns of each people is valid because Christ’s message must go right into the core of peoples’ life, into the fabrics of their whole being in order for them to understand and appreciate the message. When the Christian message is understood and lived by the people, it becomes part of them; that is, they become completely inseparable. This is what the Fathers of the African Synod describe as “[a] marriage of professed faith and concrete life, harmony between faith and culture” (McGarry 1995:33). In the final analysis, both the people who have understood the message and the missionary who brought the Gospel message will feel at home, sharing the message of Christ as equal partners in the Lord’s vineyard.

To summarize: whether we look at inculturation as the integration of the Christian experience of a local Church into the people’s culture (Crollius 1986), as the incarnation of Christian life and the Christian message in a particular cultural-context (Arrupe 1990), or as Christianity feeling at home in the cultures of each people (Waliggo et al 1986), we are saying one thing. That is, there is need to have the Gospel rooted in the local culture through inculturation. This is the primary aim of this research. Pope John Paul II regards this as “the incarnation of the Gospel in native cultures” (see George 1990:83).

The definitions given above are intended to throw some light on our understanding of inculturation. I will try to apply the insight gained from them practically in this study in the hope that Christianity in Mutare Diocese will, for example, be able to become a Christianized culture along the lines described by Okure (1990:59) in the words, “the Yoruba, the Kikuyu, the Zulu or any other Christianized culture…” In the same way we may add: ‘the Shona of Mutare Christianized culture.’
2.4 Scope of Inculturation

From the definition of inculturation and the different terms used to express it we are able to proceed to the next stage, namely, ‘the scope of inculturation’. Some authors are of the opinion that inculturation has a very wide scope. For example, Pinto (1985:17) holds that “every culture and the total culture, comes within the scope of inculturation”. On his part, Schineller (1990:83) says: “A whole range of areas of Church life calls for inculturation.” Similarly, McGarry (1995:60) maintains: “Inculturation includes the whole life of the Church and the whole process of evangelization.” Articulating all these ideas in a comprehensive manner, Waliggo (Waliggo et al. 1986:18) states: “The scope of inculturation extends to the totality of Christian life and doctrine, the central ministry of Christ from which all other ministries derive, the very nature of witnessing to Christ, proclaiming his message and worship.”

After mentioning some specific areas, like art, architecture, sculpture, music, dance, drama, formation of the local Christian community, theology, spirituality, preaching, catechism and worship, Pinto (1985:17) concludes: “In a word, the scope of inculturation is all embracing.” The scope of inculturation, therefore, must touch every aspect of Christian life. It is on this basis that I agree with Waliggo (Waliggo et al. 1986:19) when he says: “Everything must be done which destroys dichotomy in the lives of Christians and builds towards an integration of mind and heart.” In effect, the scope of inculturation must include everything, which assists Christians to grow towards Christian maturity.

Considering the various views expressed on the scope of inculturation, Catholics in the Mutare diocese in Zimbabwe can well appreciate Cardinal Arinze’s (1990:251) wise saying: “African religion intimately penetrates all the manifestations of social life. There is no dichotomy between the spiritual order and the material order, between the religious and the temporal, between the sacred and the profane.” The scope of inculturation is so immense that it cannot be easily exhausted. This explains why, in discussing the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese later, we will include not only the Sunday Eucharistic celebrations, but also two of the important solemnities of the Church.
and the joyful moments in the life of Catholics in Mutare. The next section examines the agents of inculturation, through whom it will become clear that inculturation penetrates every aspect of human existence.

2.5 Agents of Inculturation

If inculturation is ultimately to achieve its goal, it needs every Christian to participate actively in its promotion. The agents of inculturation refer to those people who see to it that it is successfully implemented. In this regard the document *Instrumentum Laboris* (1993:49), expressing the mind of the African Catholic Bishops, remarks:

The work of inculturation involves the entire Church community because it is the whole Church that must be missionary. Therefore, it must never be thought that inculturation falls under the responsibility of foreign missionaries or of a handful of experts. It is the responsibility of the whole believing community.

This wise statement of the African Bishops is not only a good observation, but also an advice and a warning. In the first place, it is an advice because inculturation should not be left solely in the hands of foreign missionaries since their efforts at inculturation are likely to be abandoned when they leave their mission areas. If that happened, there would be no continuity. It is also a warning because if the work of inculturation is left in the hands of experts only, it will become purely an idea that will end up in classrooms as a theory, without any practice. McGarry (1995:61) explains the implication of this as follows: “If inculturation were the work only of experts, there is a danger that it would be a conceptual and technical inculturation coming from the outside and not affecting peoples’ lives.” This is true because theory is one thing and practice is another. For inculturation to be effective, it must be put into daily practice. Hence there is need to involve the local Christian community in its implementation. This combined effort is well expressed by *Instrumentum Laboris* (1993:49):

In fact, if pastors and theologians, for the most part, organize pastoral work and theological reflections, the gestures, attitudes, expressions, prayers and songs, along with musical instruments and rhythms will spring from the spiritual depths of the faithful people.
The era of passive involvement is over and inculturation should help all the members of small Christian communities, notably in Mutare, to be fully and actively involved. In agreeing with this joint effort, Schineller (1990:68) observes:

The agent of inculturation is not the sole resource or the sole leader, but is perhaps best seen as the one who works with others, who complements his or her own talents and resources with the talents of others. Through community effort we are much more likely to achieve solutions that are more helpful and more lasting, because so much more collaborative input has gone into the formulation not only of the solution but also of the problem.

For a successful implementation of inculturation, therefore, there must be facilitators who are willing to work co-operatively with the people at the grass roots. Their work is to be seen as complementary to other peoples’ efforts to transmit the Christian message. It is only when the Gospel is internalized that it can become part and parcel of the people in their various cultures. Therefore, the Gospel must affect every Christian in his or her whole life, for example, in married life, at work places, even in public life and politics. The aim is to transform peoples’ lives from within. In his assessment of this process, McGarry (1995:62) observes: “This is the laborious process of inculturation, conversion from-within that must take place on the way to an African rite, involving liturgy, law and Church structures, which will then express the genius of African Christianity.”

As Christians, we believe that we need the help of God to be able to achieve our goals. Thus, the Holy Spirit as an agent of inculturation is very important in this respect. Dhavamony (1997:105), visualizing the important role played by the Holy Spirit, elaborately illustrates:

The Church is the body of Christ, perpetuating the redemptive incarnation in the world. Since inculturation has taken as its model the redemptive incarnation, the Holy Spirit works in making the Gospel incarnate in culture. It is so because the Church which inculturates the Gospel embodies the same principle of the redemptive incarnation and lives by the same life. The continuation of the redemptive incarnation must be defined as the presence of the spirit in the Church, for the presence of the spirit is the presence of Christ.
This elaborate discourse from Dhavamony takes us back to our earlier discussion on the incarnation model of inculturation, where the word of God is said to become flesh and to dwell among his people. Dhavamony (1997:106) goes further to explain how the Holy Spirit becomes a meeting ground between the Gospel and culture:

The Holy Spirit is the ground of the meeting between the Gospel and culture because He is the one who makes us mutually aware of the other people and their cultures, opening our eyes to Christ and to our fellow humans in Christ, and to the cultural needs. The spirit of man [and woman] enables us to be mutually present to one another.

The Holy Spirit, therefore, is an important agent of inculturation because it has been given to the Church as the spirit of discernment, which leads every Christian into the truth.

2.6 The Importance of Inculturating the Gospel

Having defined inculturation and examined its scope and agents, it is also necessary to discuss its importance in relation to the Gospel. In recent years, discussions in areas like missiology, liturgy, catechesis, and the whole domain of sacramental theology have in one way or another focused their attention on inculturation. One may ask: What makes the subject of inculturating the Gospel important? This section will try to explore avenues that highlight this importance. Doing so will also help in answering the question: Why inculturate the Eucharist, with special reference to Mutare Diocese?

Some scholars have started to ask another salient question. Why talk of inculturation while people in Africa are dying of ethnic and civil wars, of AIDS and its related diseases, of draughts, famines as well as other natural disasters? In situations like these, some argue, attention should be focused on ways of solving these problems instead of talking about inculturation of the Gospel. It is not my aim in this thesis to pass any judgment on which of these types of issues is more important. Instead, my aim is to try to see how the inculturation of the Gospel, or the Good News, can help salvage the lives of people who find themselves in these doomed situations. The Fathers of the African Synod of 1994 not only declared inculturation a necessity but also a priority in relation to the Christian faith. An examination of why they reached this conclusion may throw some
light on its importance, especially as it relates to people in Mutare and their Christian way of life. The mind of these Fathers is well expressed in this meaningful passage:

It follows that inculturation does not only consist in transforming the mentality of human beings or groups of people, but also implies approaching cultures in such ways that they are enabled, from within themselves, to be fertile. Christianity becomes itself enriched when through inculturation it enters into dialogue with peoples and with their cultures. An inculturated evangelisation will help people give flesh to evangelical values in their language and symbols, their history, politics, business life and own ways of developing *(Instrumentum Laboris 1993:43)*.

Indeed, it is at this present time that the inculturation of the Gospel is most needed in the African continent, and in Mutare diocese of Zimbabwe in particular. This is because of the need for the transformation of the African mentality so that Africans can realize that some of the problems they face are caused by themselves—as human beings. In a country where there is oppression, exploitation, exclusion, greed, corruption and injustice, people will resist and sometimes resort to confrontation, violence and war. These types of reactions are caused by human beings and could be avoided. In places like Rwanda and Burundi, countries where the majority of people are Christians, wars have been fought along ethnic lines and many people have lost their lives. This is where inculturation is expected to come in to change peoples’ outlook in the light of the Gospel. In order to achieve this important goal, we must admit that inculturation must work through the Church. This is where I consider Uzukwu’s (1996:3) suggestion very appropriate when he says:

The Church, aided by the reflection of her theologians, will become a more credible agent of change when Christian life emerges from the realities of the African context and Christian theology responds to questions posed by the African context and is nourished by local resources.

Inculturation will be useful in this circumstance because it will not only act as an agent of change, but it will also be an instrument for identifying local resources proper to, for instance, Shona culture. Okure (1990:103) is, therefore, right when she asserts: “Inculturation of faith in the Gospel by Christians of different cultures will mean for the Church a new discovery of the Gospel, proclaimed authoritatively to all people and,
therefore, an enrichment for the life of the Church.” In the case of Mutare, for example, the inculturation of the Good News of Christ will be an enrichment if it helps to bring new healing to those warring ethnic groups (Shona, Ndebele) so as to change the mentality of all in these disturbed communities. It will also be an enrichment when the Gospel permeates not only the culture of the people but also their lives. By so doing, inculturation of the Gospel as proclaimed at the Eucharistic celebration, will make Mutare Catholics reliable citizens, trust-worthy members of the Church and true followers of Christ.

An effective inculturation of the Gospel will help the Zimbabwean people in general, and Mutare Catholics in particular, to be able to encounter and identify Christ in the lives of their fellow Zimbabweans, thereby respecting, nurturing and preserving life instead of destroying it. That is, Christ, who is one of us, will become the center and agent of reconciliation for both Shona and Ndebele. In this way Christ, who has taken root in Zimbabwean soil and culture, will become a sign of unity. Inculturation will also increase the active participation of the people of God in the Church. When everybody participates in Christian community celebrations, each person’s presence and the role he or she plays is well appreciated. Through such participation, it becomes easy to motivate people because everyone is known, valued and appreciated. Inculturation of the Gospel will help people to be self-reliant. This means that the people of Zimbabwe and the Catholics in Mutare, in particular, will work together to develop the resources in their country for the enrichment of all. In this way they will minimize dependence on foreign help and also reduce the rate of corruption among leaders of all walks of life. Reflecting along these lines, Instrumentum Laboris explains: (1993:44) “Inculturation will show much more clearly that, in the biblical perspective, everybody is given to Christ as his inheritance, and that by the inculturation process, peoples can offer to Christ what they received from him.”

Inculturation of the Gospel will also help Mutare Catholics to value and appreciate their culture, which in the past was alienated and despised by Western colonizers. One major
problem facing Mutare Catholics is what McGarry (1995:55) calls the conflict of “two worlds, namely, the world of (Western) Christian beliefs and values and the world of African traditions.” The solution to the conflict of these two worlds is sought for in the inculturation of the Gospel. *Instrumentum Laboris* (1993:45) has a very good picture of what inculturation can do in order to solve this problem. In this picturesque form, the document comments:

Inculturation will help the African Christian resolve the tension between the two ways of living, and to accept what it costs to abandon beliefs and practices that are incompatible with the Gospel. Without inculturation, the faith of the African will remain fragile and superficial, lacking depth and personal commitment.

In order to be firm and committed Christians, therefore, it is important to inculturate the Gospel in all Catholic dioceses. Similarly, in view of the subject on hand, it is reasonable to say that inculturation of the Gospel is not only important but also overdue for Catholics in Mutare diocese. Since it is an on-going process, it must extend to all aspects of human life, including our Christian faith.

### 2.7 Conclusion

The main aim of this chapter was not to trace historically the origins of inculturation. Rather, it was to explore the meaning and importance of inculturation. In the course of this discussion certain terms related to the term “inculturation” were examined so as to see how they might help us in understanding it better. It was found that none of these terms, except for “incarnation”, optimally expressed the same meaning as that contained in the term “inculturation”. However, they all had some form of relationship to it and thus played important roles in facilitating the search for an appropriate word. I also tried to look at the scope and agents of inculturation. While the scope refers us to the extent of work that has to be done to achieve inculturation, its agents are those individuals and institutions that are instrumental in bringing it about. Since the focus of this work is on Zimbabwe, it has been suggested that the great work that awaits each and every Catholic in this country is to relate their Christian faith to the Zimbabwean culture, and especially
in Mutare diocese. This challenges us to talk about the inculturation of the Christian faith as expressed specifically in the celebration of the Eucharist.
CHAPTER 3

PRESENT CHALLENGES FACING THE CHURCH IN INCULTURATING THE EUCHARIST

3.1 Introduction
Chapter one of this thesis set out to highlight the core of this research, that is, inculturating the Eucharist and the various ways of going about it. Chapter two gave the various definitions of inculturation, with an emphasis on its importance and relevance. Chapter three will focus on some of the challenges facing the Church in inculturating the Eucharist. It is important to talk about these challenges at this early stage because they will surface from time to time in the course of this research. This chapter, therefore, serves to explain why it is important to embark specifically on inculturating the Eucharist. This undertaking provides a challenge if the Church in Mutare is to benefit from the process of inculturation. This kind of challenge is well captured and properly articulated by Healey and Sybertz (1996:18) in this remark on inculturation of the Church in general:

One of the great challenges of inculturation in Christian Churches in Africa today is to make correlation between African oral literature and cultural symbols and Christianity and to express this in pastoral theological reflections that concretely speak to peoples’ everyday life.

I do not intend to talk about inculturation in general here. Rather, the aim of this chapter is to approach inculturation practically by focusing attention on the meaningful celebration of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese—what could rightly be called ‘inculturated Eucharist’. Although the primary aim is to discuss challenges facing the Catholic Church in inculturating the Eucharist in Mutare, the scope of the discussion will be broadened in order to give the topic some flesh. Examples in the discussion will be drawn from some African countries. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Lumen Gentium) (1966, No.11) refers to the Eucharist as “the source and summit of the Christian Life”. Like all people, Zimbabweans value life; that is why the celebrations that
must appeal to Catholics in Mutare diocese, the focus of this study, must touch the core of their life. Power (1995:341) is right when he makes this important remark:

One necessary preliminary to the association of [the] Eucharist with cultural models would be to allow the people to bring their own lives and life struggle to the table in the food and drink their earth and their hands provide. In this way, they would be blessed in Christ’s memory in their own lives and commune with his body and blood in the transformation of the symbols of their own existence and life-world.

Power’s remark not only summarizes the central message of this chapter, but it also postulates the memorial aspect of the Eucharist which makes the celebration of the Eucharist real. Pope Paul VI (1967:19) has a similar idea in mind when he talks of Christ’s ministry as it relates to Africans, whose culture he recognizes and upholds thus:

The teaching of Jesus Christ and his redemption are, in fact, the complement, the renewal and the bringing to perfection of all that is good in human tradition. And that is why the African, who becomes a Christian, does not disown himself [or herself], but takes up the age-old values of tradition in Spirit and in truth.

The Pope admonishes and encourages Africans not to disown either their humanity as Africans or their cultures. Instead, he advises them to integrate their whole being and culture into their religion and worship, bearing in mind that Christ, who has called them, has the power to transform and to perfect both the people and their cultures. Following upon the footsteps of his predecessor in appreciating African culture and values, Pope John Paul II (1995:62) also maintains: “The challenge of inculturation in Africa consists in ensuring that the followers of Christ will evermore fully assimilate the Gospel message, while remaining faithful to all authentic African values.” The Church in Mutare diocese is, therefore, challenged to bring into reality the true understanding of Christianity as it manifests itself in Mutare and among the Catholics in the diocese. Here lies the center and the core of our discussion in this chapter. The implementation of Eucharistic inculturation will be more fully discussed in chapter nine.
3.2 Defining the Word ‘Church’

It is important, at the onset, to define the word “Church” and to explain the scope in which it will be used in this thesis. As the word is used here, ‘Church’ refers primarily to the Catholic Church in Mutare, Zimbabwe. However, I will from time to time refer to the universal (Catholic) Church with its headquarters in Rome, from where most of the permission to implement Eucharistic inculturation is expected to come. Taking the local and the universal aspects of the Church into consideration, Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:215) has this to say:

In the New Testament the term *ekklesia* always refers to a group of people: (1) those Christians in a region or city e.g., (Acts 14:23ff, 1Cor.1:2, 2Cor. 1:1); (2) those gathered in a particular house (Rom. 16:5, 1Cor. 16:19); (3) all Christians gathered in the Church (Mt. 16:18, Eph. 1:2).

About the Church that is characteristic of the New Testament, Schnackenburg (1965:9) remarks: “The Church is everywhere present in the New Testament even where it is not manifest in concepts and imagery.” In the same vein, we can also say that the Catholic Church is everywhere present. Hence we can also talk of the Catholic Church in Mutare diocese.

In order to realize her call to the full and to submit to the master’s will, the Catholic Church, according to its understanding of its mission, has to re-enact the Last Supper event by celebrating the Eucharist in an inculturated manner. Pointing at the centrality of the Eucharist in Christian worship, but with a considerable emphasis on the Last Supper event, Feeley-Harnik (1994:1) reports:

The Eucharist, the meal of bread and wine that commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is one of the central sacraments of Christianity. Also known as the Lord’s Supper (*Caena Domini*), the Lord’s Table (*Mensa Domini*), and the Lord’s Body (*Corpus Domini*), it derives from the descriptions of the Last Supper of Christ with his disciples collected in the gospels and in the letters of Paul, in which thanksgiving, *eucharistia* in the Greek of the New Testament, played a large part.
Feeley-Harnik’s presentation is both a description and an explanation of what the Eucharist is and consists of. Hence, our immediate challenge is how to celebrate the Eucharist so that it becomes more meaningful to our people—that is, by inculturating it.

3.3 Challenges of Eucharistic Inculturation, with Special Reference to Mutare

Some of the glaring challenges which inculturation of the Eucharist must address are the following. First, if Eucharistic inculturation is to be real, it must challenge the divisions among Christians, which are some of the worst scandals in Christianity. Secondly, any effort to bring about unity among Christians in Mutare must consider some of the religious and cultural meal aspects that are characteristic to Shona culture and religion. Furthermore, in the context of Mutare diocese, an inculturated Eucharist must also suggest a way of celebrating the Eucharist as in the context of an ‘African family,’ by encouraging the reformulation of Eucharistic symbols as well as promoting the use of local staple food and drink. In an attempt to give content to the sub-headings outlined in this chapter, I will try to highlight these and other challenges facing the Church in inculturating the Eucharist in Mutare diocese.

3.3.1 Eucharist and Christian Divisions: A Challenge to Inculturation in Mutare,

In this section, I intend to discuss the effects of divisions among Christians, especially in Mutare, to explain in what sense they are a challenge and to point out possible ways in which Eucharistic inculturation could help to foster unity—an important aspect of the Eucharist. One of the greatest challenges of an inculturated Eucharist is the existence of protracted and sharp divisions within Christianity. Division is the opposite of unity. A brief survey of how divisions came about within Christianity is necessary here to provide a background for this section. Broadly speaking, there are two outstanding divisions among the followers of Christ, namely, the separation between the Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches which began on 16 July 1054. There is also the Reformation that brought about the permanent division of Christians in 1517. While the separation between the East, with its headquarters in Constantinople, and the West, with its headquarters in Rome, was mainly doctrinal, followed by the issue of a married clergy
and the disagreement on whether to use leavened or unleavened bread for the Eucharist, the Reformation was more serious than these issues of disagreement.

Whatever might have been the causes of these separations and divisions, it is sad to note that since the eleventh and sixteenth centuries the Church of Christ has remained divided and its members sometimes look upon themselves as enemies. The African Church has not been spared from this enmity that exists among Catholics, Orthodox Christians and Protestants. Each has, in the past, tried to discredit others with all sorts of derogatory words characterized by hate and spitefulness. Africa has not been left unaffected by these hostilities, and their effect lingers till today in Mutare. Hence the appeal from recent Popes to African Catholics to work toward ‘inculturation,’ specifically that of the Eucharist, becomes indispensable. After assessing the relationship between Catholics and Protestants, in particular, especially in Africa, Waliggo (1987:36) affirms:

It was these attitudes that made both Catholics and Protestants engage in a bitter struggle of words and emotions, each fully convinced that the fight was between the citadel of Satan and the Saints of God. There was no room for compromise or for any mutual appreciation.

In Africa, for example, the effect of this division is often demonstrated not only by the use of disparaging words but also by physical combats and armed struggles. To illustrate their harmful nature, Baur (1994:239) describes the sad situation in one instance where the children of one ancestor, inhabiting one mother-earth, fought and killed one another with the white man’s weapons:

In January 1892 the tension had grown so high that the Bangereza asked for arms from Lugard for self-protection. He issued them some four hundred and fifty guns, and the Bafranza understood this as a declaration of war. On the following day, Sunday 25 January 1892, the Battle of Mengo took place. When Catholics stormed down from Mengo Hill to meet the enemies [i.e., Protestants] on the opposite Namirembe Hill, Lugard opened fire with his machine gun and secured a Protestant victory.
The situation is not as simple as saying that Lugard supplied arms to secure victory for the Protestants. This is an issue that involves shedding the blood of kith and kin as well as wasting the blood of those who share one faith, who in their various churches would pray and call God or refer to God as ‘Our Father.’ Because of these cancerous divisions that have eaten deep into the blood cells of both Catholics and Protestants, it has not been possible for them to celebrate the Eucharist together. It is from this background that Hardelin (1968) concludes: “The Eucharist during the nineteenth century was not the sacramentum unitatis, but rather a point of division, separating not only church from church, but also different groups within the same church from one another.”

One would regard Hardelin’s remark as true, but the fact regrettable, because for all intents and purposes, the Eucharist is not meant for division but unity. It is a celebration and a meal that is meant to unite. Its constituent elements, bread and wine, may be seen as symbols of unity. For example, several grains of wheat are crushed and mixed together, then baked so as to make a loaf of bread. In the same way several grapes, when crushed, mingle their juice or substance into a single cup of wine. In fact, what no one single grain or grape could do, that is, to become a loaf of bread or a cup of wine, is made possible when they are crushed and brought together. Furthermore, the consecrated host and wine are given out for eating and drinking from one ciborium and one chalice—the sacred vessels that contain the body and blood of Christ at Mass. This again shows unity in practice. Paul was convinced of this unity that is characteristic of the Eucharist when he insisted: “Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we are partakers of the one bread” (1Cor.10:17).

With these examples, Christians in Mutare are challenged to answer this question: Shall we still remain divided or work towards unity, which the Eucharist signifies? Here comes our main challenge. As Fernandez (2001:119) observes: “The liturgy of the Eucharist—challenges us to effectively unite ourselves to others, not only as we present our gifts, but also as we pray that these gifts be transformed into Christ.” It is certain that the divisions among Christians have adverse effects on Christianity. The Eucharist is one primary
source that is capable of bringing about unity among Christians. This is because, by its nature, it is a sacrament of unity, not of division. In his book *The Eucharist, the Heart of Life*, Cardinal Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI (2003:114), has this to say:

> The main emphasis of the Eucharist here becomes apparent: the Eucharist is instrumental in the process by which Christ builds himself a Body and makes us into one single bread, one single Body. The content of the Eucharist, what happens in it, is the uniting of Christians, bringing them from their state of separation into the unity of the one Bread and the one Body.

This powerful statement of Pope Benedict XVI summarizes the aim of this section because it brings out clearly the important essence of the Eucharist, that is, the essence of unity. Conscious of this fact, the Catholic Church in Rome has taken steps since Vatican II to encourage unity among Christians. One of the steps is that of ecumenism—referred to as efforts towards universal unity. To show how this unity is primary in the minds of the Fathers of the Catholic Church, the “Decree on Ecumenism”—*Unitatis Redintegratio*—article No.1, has this emphasis: “The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council.” In order to facilitate progress towards unity, ecumenism encourages dialogue among Christians. It is through this dialogue that Christians come to realize what binds them together. Thus, ecumenism is aimed at mutual recognition of one another’s good will and unconditional respect for one another’s religious freedom.

The Church’s efforts toward ecumenism continue to bear good fruits. The most recent of such good fruits, for example, was eminent at the burial of Pope John Paul II when Catholic and Orthodox Churches celebrated the Eucharist together—a rare celebration of its kind since the separation of the two Churches in 1054. At this Eucharistic celebration, it was apparent that the Eucharist, in the words of Benedict XVI, is meant for ‘uniting Christians.’ Many other Christian denominations also participated in the celebration of that funeral Mass. If Christians in Mutare are to be true to themselves, this is the time to come together and fight against divisions in all their ramifications.
3.3.2 Eucharist in the Context of the African Family: A Model for Mutare diocese

In examining the challenges that inculturation of the Eucharist faces, the model of an ‘African family’ and its importance comes to mind for adoption by Mutare diocese. In this section I intend to highlight two aspects in which the Eucharistic celebration may be viewed: The first aspect will enable us to identify the key values of the African family, while the second will examine how the Christian family of God in Mutare diocese could borrow some of these African family values in order to enrich its Eucharistic celebrations. The integration of the Christian faith into the culture of a particular people is the essence of inculturation. Regarding the essence of inculturation, Ukpong (1995:122) remarks: “For, so long as inculturation has to do with interaction between Christianity and culture, it must be seen to mean not only Christian practice being modeled after indigenous culture but also culture being influenced by Christian faith…” In other words, the interaction between Christianity and culture must be reciprocal.

3.3.2.1 Values of the African Family

It is important to make a brief survey of those cultural values that characterize the African family before discussing their relevance to Eucharistic inculturation. In the following analogy and metaphor technique, Fogliacco (2001:134) lays down some of the guiding principles and constituents of a family:

According to our analysis, the family is a unique type of human community whose members (1) are connected to one another by blood-ties, unlike all other societies; (2) new members originate from within the family itself by way of procreation; and (3) are therefore linked to one another by a constant and invariable pattern of mutual relationships.

In effect, we can say that the key components of a family are membership, relationship and responsibility towards one another. Mbiti (1969:106-107) gives us a picture of the various members that make up an African family in this organized pattern:

For African people, the family has a much wider circle of members… In traditional society, the family includes parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters who may have their own children, and other immediate relatives. In many areas these are what
anthropologists call extended families... The family also includes the departed relatives, whom we have designated as the living-dead. These are, as their name implies, ‘alive’ in the memories of their surviving families, and are thought to be still interested in the affairs of the family to which they once belonged in their physical life... [The] African concept of the family also includes the unborn members who are still in the loins of the living. They are the buds of hope and expectation, and each family makes sure that its own existence is not extinguished.

Characteristically, the African family is well bonded, where every member is cherished and appreciated. This bond is so noticeable that what affects one, affects the other. In this family system, children are taught to eat together as a way of expressing the bond of unity existing among them. Consequently, when one member of the family is away, the others at home will not eat until that member comes back. Healey & Sybertz (1996:107) beautifully portray this close relationship among African families thus:

The African emphasis on relationship is closely connected to family values. African family values are inclusive. Whether people are members of the immediate family or the extended family or close friends or even visitors, everyone participates in the close family relationships and friendships.

This close relationship finds its fulfillment in a solidarity that is enshrined in community life. This prompts the Igbo people to say that a child belongs to the community. That is, “nwa bu nwa oha.” Thus, communal life is well emphasized. As Mbiti (1969:108) illustrates: “In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately.” Hence the saying: ‘I am, because we are; and since we are, therefore, I am.’ Thus every member of the family is important and valued.

We have explained the main features of a typical African traditional family. It is important to consider some of its values to see how they could be of help in the celebration of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. In the first place, it is with much appreciation that the recent Popes regard African values, especially the extended family system, with high esteem. We see this in the writings of Pope Paul VI, notably in *Africae Terrarum* (On African Lands). Commenting on this important aspect of African culture, Pope Paul VI (1967:17) remarks: “Another characteristic element of African tradition is
the sense of family. On this, it is significant to note the moral and also the religious value, seen in attachment to a family, evidenced further by the bond with ancestors.” In his own appreciation of the values of the African family, John Paul II challenges the Christian family to plant its roots deeply like the African family. Hence John Paul II (1995:71) observes: “The Christian family, as a domestic Church built on the solid cultural pillars and noble values of the African tradition of the family, is called upon to be a powerful nucleus of Christian witness in a society undergoing rapid and profound changes.” African cultural values based on the family are powerful cultural instruments for the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese.

Looking at the Church in Mutare, for example, as a domestic church, it could be appropriately called the extended family of God. This domestic church incorporates all the peoples of different races and ethnic groups. “A special characteristic of African families noted in the answers to the Lineamenta, according to Instrumentum Laboris (1993:35) is that they often contain members who belong to different religious confessions.” One of the challenges to the local church is to organize the celebration of the Eucharist to take place in the form of an African family, where the meal is central and where each person’s presence is needed and felt. In the same way, the Eucharist must be central in the lives of all Christians in Mutare diocese.

As a starting point, just as the mother in an African family makes sure that every member of the family is present at meals and also properly fed, in the same way, the Catholic Church in Mutare diocese, as a mother, must also not exclude from her celebrations Catholic members who are not fully married according to Church law. All Catholics at Eucharistic celebration must be recognized and accorded the dignity that befits them. In other words, the Catholic Church needs to reconsider admitting those of its members who are married according to African custom by integrating the traditional and Christian marriages in the same celebration. It is a family where love and respect exist and a family where each member participates in those functions that promote the building up of a solid family. This is the fundamental characteristic of an African family that must act as a
model to Mutare diocese in her Eucharistic celebrations. Accordingly, this is an inculturation challenge to the Catholic Church in Mutare. Healy & Sybertz (1996:127) describe a Church that celebrates the Eucharist in the context of the family well in this passage:

The Church can be pictured as a great family with Jesus Christ as the head serving under the Father. Human kind is bonded together in a universal brotherhood and sisterhood. All Christians are adopted sons and daughters. Jesus is the oldest brother. One part of this great family is the African community in Christ.

The 1994 African Synod of Bishops did well to model the Church in Africa as an extended family of God. This model of the Church remains to be fully implemented when the Eucharist is to be celebrated in the context of the Zimbabwean family in Mutare diocese, with Shona cultural values, where everyone is welcomed, loved and respected. The notion of one extended family in Mutare will dispose all Catholics present at Eucharistic celebration to pray and to eat together. It is this cultural value that must be inculturated into the Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese. We regard this as a challenge because it is yet to take place in this diocese.

3.3.3 Reformulating Eucharistic Symbols as an Aspect of Inculturation

Another challenge that faces the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese is the reformulation of Eucharistic symbols to reflect the Shona cultural symbols. I intend to begin this section by briefly examining the definition of a symbol in the context of the Eucharist. Furthermore, I will argue that any symbol that will be used in the celebration of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese must be meaningful to the people who use it. For the discussion of the reformulation of Eucharistic symbols to be meaningful, it must follow some steps. First of all, the recognition of the Catholic traditional symbol of bread and wine is necessary, followed by a review of some Shona symbols like gestures, hospitality and how to incorporate them in the Eucharistic celebration. It must be pointed out that the symbolism of bread and wine will be discussed in chapter five. However, the significant role of bread in this section is a reminder of the importance of food in both religious celebrations and social activities.
In his definition of a symbol, Dhavamony (1997:52) states: “A symbol is something regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought.” Dhavamony gives us the essential characteristics of a symbol, namely, that a symbol is never forced on people. Instead, the significance of a symbol must be meaningful and acceptable to the community that endorses the value of that symbol. We cannot talk about the significance of a symbol without talking about its function. Guzie (1981:49) mentions a very powerful function of a symbol in this comment: “A real symbol always brings us into touch not just with a memory but with a living presence, and indeed, a presence which contains a hope for the future and which helps to carry us into the future.” The function of a symbol can never be just a reminiscence of past events. It must have the capability to recall not only the past but also to lead its users to the present with a living hope of the future.

With the celebration of the Eucharist in mind, Power (1995:194-5) leads us through four levels of understanding a symbolic act in terms of its significance and importance in this order:

First, one can see how a community expresses its desires and aspirations in gathering at table to share food and drink. Second, one can see how this relates to the social and institutional factors of human living. Third, there is the significance of sharing this rite in a community of mutual service and nondiscrimination. Fourth, in virtue of the blessing the gathering at the table becomes the action by which the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are proclaimed and he himself is present among them as servant and as Lord, transforming the manner of their presence in the world in which they live and to which they give shape and offering his own self as life’s nourishment.

The imagery Power presents here of a Eucharistic symbol is a powerful one: a symbol that manifests itself in eating and drinking, but goes beyond this action of eating and drinking to a recall of the past event in the life of Jesus—his death, as well as the future hope—the resurrection and the eschatological coming in glory. Thus, it is proper to state that Power’s four levels of a symbolic act agree with the functions of a symbol as outlined by Guzie. For example, Guzie maintains that a symbol brings us into contact with the memory of a living presence.
Each time we talk about the Eucharistic symbols, our minds run to the symbolism of bread and wine. They are the essential symbols of the Eucharist in the Catholic Church. However, we must also not fail to recognize some of the symbolic gestures characteristic of Shona culture. It is by blending the Eucharistic symbols with the Shona cultural symbols and gestures, for example, that their reformulation is to take place and this is a challenge to Eucharistic inculturation. In other words, a proper reformulation of Eucharistic symbols in Mutare diocese must take into consideration those important Shona cultural features. Gestures have an important place in society and more so in the Catholic Church. Uzukwu (1991:101) explains why attention must be focused on gestures in this remark: “Much attention is focused on gestures in African local Churches because the display of the body in time and space is highly developed in the continent.” Consequently, any celebration that is ‘still and motionless,’ does not appeal to Zimbabweans, especially the youths, who seem to be leaving the Catholic Church because of certain ways of celebration that do not appeal to them.

Borrowing an idea from Mvenge to illustrate the importance of symbolic gestures, Uzukwu (1991:101) writes: “An African anthropology is not preoccupied with [the] body as fallen and in need of redemption; rather the body is experienced as primary symbol where the totality of [a] person is revealed in gestures.” The body that is referred to here is that which is fully active and lively, not a body that is inactive and non-responsive. Thus, figuratively speaking, ‘Shona bodies’ are always in motion when local drums are beaten in musical rhythms. Responding to these rhythms means that there is no need again for physical redemption since the body is physically exercised. It is also important to listen to the advice of Okoye on the type of symbol necessary for our Eucharistic celebration. In the analysis of the present Roman rite in relation to symbolic gestures, Okoye (1992:285) suggests:

We must create symbols that enhance the experience of being gripped and transformed by Christ in the same way he grips and transforms our gifts. The present Roman rite seems to be consciously structured to exclude from Christ’s faithful every attitude or gesture of action considered ‘priestly’ or ministerial.
The need to reformulate the Eucharistic symbols challenges the authorities of the Church in Mutare diocese as well as theologians and liturgists to accommodate every member of the Catholic faithful, including the youths, who sometimes feel that their interests are not sufficiently catered for during Eucharistic celebrations. In other words, the Eucharistic symbols of bread and wine, for example, must go hand in hand with those Shona cultural values and symbolic gestures. While we do not advocate that gestures be limited to body motions like dancing, tapping, and so on, we also appreciate Uzukwu’s (1991:111) insight that upholds the necessity of “drawing from the depth of ethnic experience in order to verbalize in song, strident cries, acclamations, and solemn prayers [as] the Christ’s event touches Africans”. The reformulation of Eucharistic symbols, therefore, is not only a challenge in our inculturation attempts in Mutare diocese, it is also important for the successful implementation of inculturation in Mutare diocese, as will be discussed in chapter nine.

3.3.4 The Use of Zimbabwean Staple Food and Drink: An Aspect of Inculturation

One more challenge in the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese is the use of Zimbabwean staple food that is produced locally in the native soil. The point of enquiry here is whether bread and wine from grapes are part of the staple food and drink in Zimbabwe, or we should rather look for the real staple food and drink of the people to use during the Eucharistic celebration. By staple here I mean the main or principal item or element specific to the diet of a people. It is undeniably correct to state that bread and wine as they are used in our present day Eucharistic celebration are basically suited for the Mediterranean countries. Okoye (1992:284) confirms this fact as follows: “Bread and wine happen to be the food and drink of Mediterranean countries, the original bosom of the Church.” Agreeing with Okoye, but more emphatic on the significance of a meal, da Silva (1992:261) remarks: “Bread and wine are powerful signs of a familiar and fraternal meal in the Mediterranean context.” Thus, a meal can be symbolic and its symbolism is a peculiar characteristic of a particular society or community. For example, a meal can be a symbol of hospitality in Shona culture.
The staple food in most African countries is neither bread nor wine from grapes. Instead, Africa as a large continent has a variety of food items that could be considered as staple food for Africans. In different parts of Africa, millet, maize and yams are the main staple foods of the people. In West Africa, palm wine is generally accepted as the common drink for those who live along the forest areas while millet beer is common to those in the savanna areas. In Southern Africa maize is predominant, which serves as the main source of food. Though there are some pockets of vine trees that produce grapes for wine used by the elites in society, it could be reasonably argued that these grapes are not indigenous. On the contrary, wine used among the Shona speaking traditional people is brewed from indigenous grains produced locally.

From the background just given, two propositions emerge. There are those who suggest the use of local staple food and drink in the celebration of the Eucharist and those who insist on the continuation of the present use of unleavened bread and wine. Those who opt for the use of local staple food argue that the bread and wine offered at present are foreign to the people. For example, during offertory, the people bring what their hands produce from their soil, such as yams, cocoyams, bananas, oranges, chickens, and, sometimes, calabashes of palm wine. They also bring money—the little they can afford. They do not bring bread made of wheat and wine from grapes, which some of those in Mutare rural areas have never even seen. When all these items have been placed around the altar, the chief celebrant offering these gifts refers to them as ‘what the earth has given and human hands have made’, yet what he raises up to offer to God on behalf of the people is neither indigenous nor locally produced. Therefore, it becomes difficult to explain satisfactorily to those from rural areas, who have no theological training, why the food items they produce themselves could not be used in the celebration of the Eucharist. The main argument is that if the explanation given to the faithful members in Mutare, especially those in rural areas, does not sufficiently satisfy them, how could the symbol of bread and wine be meaningful to them. In the following lines, da Silva (1992:262) summarizes the mind of those who recommend a change of bread and wine thus:
We see that the elements of the Eucharist are tied to the Mediterranean cultures. Instead of being a sign of unity and universality, the bread and wine have become a sign of a foreign culture and of Western dependence. If we dismiss any other food and drink, we are imposing a Western culture, and giving it supernatural value.

The main concern as well as the challenge here is, if we do not use the staple food and drink of the people in Mutare, on which they depend and which are meaningful to them, what then are we inculturating as far as the substance of the Eucharist is concerned? In other words, for our inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare to be authentic and meaningful to Catholics in our diocese, their staple food is to be used at Mass. It is on this ground that Okoye’s argument seems to be a valid theological contribution. In the following remark Okoye (1992:284), as an African exegete, questions:

The Eucharist as a sacrificial meal in which Christ gives himself in the form of food and drink is a dogmatic fact. But did Christ really intend this food and drink to be for all times and places wheaten bread and wine from grapes even where these cannot grow, or in periods of scarcity (for example, wartime) when they cannot be reached for any price?

In Africa, for example, where ethnic and political wars are regrettably fought every now and then, what happens to the celebration of the Eucharist if wheaten bread and wine from grapes are not available? In many African countries, Nigeria as an example, the Mass wine is imported and the quantity of altar wine used at any Eucharistic celebration is very small so as to make sure that the quantity available lasts longer. We know that Christ is a precious gift of the Father to his beloved children; the question is whether Christ would want those who are to receive him to go through such a stringent measure that sometimes takes them away from their own cultural heritage and practices. This is another important challenge that requires an urgent attention of the Church hierarchies in Mutare diocese.

Another reason why some people oppose the use of bread and wine from wheat and grapes is economic. Echoing the minds of those who opt for the use of indigenous staple food, da Silva (1992:260) writes: “One of the reasons given by those who favor a change of the elements in the Eucharist is economic. They say that bread and wine are imported
goods which are very expensive.” At this time, when the Africans and their sympathizers are asking for the cancellation of huge debts, it is unreasonable to add more to these debts through the importation of elements used in the celebration of the Eucharist in, for instance, Mutare diocese of Zimbabwe.

Finally, it has been shown in what sense the incarnation is an important aspect of inculturation. As Jesus incarnated himself into the Jewish culture, in the same way the Church that has become his body as well as the carrier of his Good News, is challenged to make Jesus’ incarnation a reality by incarnating the Gospel into the culture of the people and all that this entails. In this case, there is need to reconsider the need for the use of staple food and drink in the celebration of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. On the other hand, some people insist that bread and wine must be used in the celebration of the Eucharist.

Among the reasons advanced by this group of people, as recorded by da Silva (1992:263-265), two stand out remarkably:

The authors who defend the present discipline of the sacrament of the Eucharist argue that the word ‘this’ means, not only the gestures of breaking and eating the bread and drinking the wine, but also the specific elements used in that action... Finally, the doctrine of the incarnation is also called into play to reject any change. This doctrine requires that Christians accept Jesus as a person of his time, country and culture. The participation is a unique event that cannot happen twice. Jesus was the son of Mary born in Judea in the first century. He is tied to his socio-cultural context. Bread and wine are the two fundamental goods of his culture.

Each of the two sides has valid biblical, theological and economic reasons and arguments. In spite of these reasons and arguments, it is important to emphasize that the faith of the bulk of the rural people in Mutare diocese, for example, who are followers of Christ but who may not understand fully these theological arguments, must be taken into consideration.
In view of these pros and cons, it is necessary for the Catholic hierarchy to address the issue of using the staple food of the people at Eucharistic celebration. Thus an honest examination of the question whether the use of bread and wine is looked upon as an imposition by those who do not use them as their staple food and drink is very necessary. In a way, it could be seen as an imposition because both Okoye and Shorter are concerned about the treatment given to some of those who tried to use their own local staple food and drink in the celebration of the Eucharist. Speaking in general of what happened in some places where the experiment of the use of a local staple food and drink was tried, Shorter (1997:65) reports:

For eight years the bishops of two dioceses in Northern Cameroun and Chad allowed millet bread and millet beer to replace unleavened wheat bread and wine from the grape. The experiment came to an end with the publication in 1980 of the Vatican’s instruction Inaestmabile Donum (not necessarily a final decision).

Okoye (1992:283) is more specific regarding that type of treatment when he observes: “Bishop Dupont of Pala (Chad) actually experimented with millet bread and beer between 1973 and 1975. He was promptly retired.” Such treatments, as narrated by these two authors, amount to imposition and a form of force. The situation does not encourage any original creativity, and compliance to this rule is out of fear, not out of conviction. Perhaps, what might help to solve the problem of the use of bread and wine from grapes is to leave it in the hands of the various Bishops’ conferences in Africa. Through this medium, the local people would be consulted before the final decision is made. This would give the Catholics in Africa in general, and in Mutare in particular, a sense of belonging when they take part in matters that involve their faith and existence. For this reason, therefore, Uzukwu (1991:110) is right when he affirms: “I maintain that the initiative in the choice of food items to be used in the Eucharistic ritual should rest within the Church in Africa.”

We are now in position to consider how the inculturation of Zimbabwean staple food challenges the Catholics in Mutare diocese. In the first place, maize, which is an important staple food for all in Mutare and is also universally recognized, can easily serve as both bread and wine, especially when it is mixed with millet. Furthermore, the
use of maize as bread in the celebration of the Eucharist would play an important role to convince Catholics in Mutare diocese that what they are offering is the fruit of their hands, coming from their soil. The acceptance of maize to serve as bread and wine at Mass would be a concrete step to the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese because maize is an important staple food in Shona culture. Therefore, bread made of maize becomes a way of promoting inculturation when it is used at the Eucharistic celebration, and it will make sense or be meaningful to Catholics in Mutare.

The challenge lies with the Catholic hierarchy in Mutare diocese. It is for them to have courage to convince Rome that it is possible to produce bread from maize. As a temporary measure, the Catholic hierarchy could ask for permission from Rome to experiment on the celebration of the Mass with bread made of maize. Another challenge is also to convince the people themselves that refined maize could be used as altar bread at Mass. It is important to prepare the Catholics in Mutare on the importance of celebrating the Eucharist with bread made of maize because people are generally inclined to resist change. While we hope that the use of Zimbabwean staple food in the celebration of the Eucharist will be addressed by the Church hierarchies, we must also be concerned about the problem of Eucharistic famine, which is experienced in the Catholic Church.

3.3.5 Eucharistic Famine: A Challenge to Inculturation

Eucharistic famine has become a characteristic phenomenon in the Catholic Church. By “Eucharistic famine” I mean the condition of those Catholics who are deprived of the opportunity to receive Holy Communion, for reasons which will soon become clear. An effort will be made in this section to examine its causes in Mutare and to give some suggestions that may be of help in resolving it. Though this discussion will focus on Mutare diocese, authors like Shorter and Magesa base their arguments on the subject on the African continent in general. Therefore, a general survey of the problem in Africa will be made, while the solution sought will be focused on Mutare. Shorter (1987:132) analogically classifies the Church in Africa into two categories in this lengthy passage:
The first Church is the Church of the Eucharistically privileged, the Church of those who, by reason of their proximity to a Mass-center or because of their marital conformity to the Church’s regulations on marriage, are able to celebrate the Eucharist frequently and to participate in it to the fullest degree by receiving Communion. The second nation or Church is that of the Eucharistically underprivileged, the Church of those who live in scattered rural villages, far away from regular Mass-centers and who celebrate Sunday with Bible reading and prayer in the absence of a priest, sometimes with—but usually without—Communion given outside of Mass by a catechist or lay minister. It is also the Church of those who are temporarily or permanently excluded from Communion by the Church’s discipline on marriage, a discipline which has not yet come to terms with the socio-cultural realities of African tradition.

By Eucharistic famine, therefore, I mean the condition of those who are starved of Holy Communion—the bread of life, as Jesus called it—either because there is no priest available to celebrate and share the Communion with them, or because, as already seen in section 3.3.2.1, they are excluded on the grounds of prevailing Church law on marriages. These two groups pose challenges to the Church hierarchies, especially in Mutare. The group with marriage problems, however, has a more serious challenge. An Igbo proverb says: “Agu-u nwere elemanya adighi egbu mmadu.” The same proverb exists in Shona: “Ane nzara, ane tarisiro kuti agutsikane haurayi.” It means: The hunger that has hope does not kill. This proverb relates to the first group in which those who are starved of Holy Communion at least have some hope that one day they can receive it. For example, in Mutare rural areas, where visits by priests’ are often spaced over long periods, the people there may decide to sacrifice and go to the cities in order to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion because there is nothing preventing them from doing so. If they lack the means to go to the cities for Mass, they still have hope that some day a priest will come to celebrate with them, and on that occasion they will receive Holy Communion. When this happens, the proverb quoted above becomes real and meaningful. On the other hand, those with marriage problems could go for years without receiving Holy Communion until they comply with the Church’s marriage law. Staying without Holy Communion for this indefinite period is what is referred to here as ‘Eucharistic famine’.
In order to encapsulate all we have said so far and before we make some suggestions on how to minimize Eucharistic famine in Mutare diocese, Gittins’s (1993:78) observation is worth taking note of as he remarks:

A great irony today, and particularly painful to those within the Roman Catholic tradition, is that as the contemporary liturgical movement has tried to ‘restore the Eucharist to the place which it had in early Christian practices,’ the Church finds itself beleaguered and sometimes embarrassed by hungry communities, which look up and are not fed. Yet quite apart from the critical issue of a ‘Eucharistic famine,’ … there is another perspective that might offer a way forward.

There is, therefore, the need for the Mutare diocese to look for some measures to address the problem of Eucharistic famine. Eucharistic famine is a challenge to inculturation in Zimbabwe largely because it is not in line with Shona culture, where, again as already observed, every member of the family shares in a family meal.

Religious nuns, catechists and lay ministers in Mutare have usually been of great help in distributing Holy Communion to regular communicants and to invalids after attendance at Sunday services. While receiving Holy Communion within the celebration of the Mass is much more preferred, the practice of distributing Holy Communion outside Mass to people who otherwise would not have had it is also encouraged because it is the same Christ that is received each time. Zimbabwean Catholics must, however, try to overcome the shortage of priests by inviting priests from other African countries where there are more priests who are willing to serve in other areas which are in need of their services.

Of primary concern in this section, however, are those Catholics who have no hope of ever receiving Holy Communion because they have not complied with the Church’s laws on marriage. It is important to examine these Church laws that forbid some Catholics, especially those who married according to custom, from receiving Holy Communion. The reason is to determine how to blend the Church and Shona traditional marriages together. It is by blending the two types of marriages together, it seems, that the Eucharistic famine arising as a result of marriage will be eliminated. The Church law that
is applicable here, canon 1055, paragraph 2, states: “consequently, a valid marriage contract cannot exist between baptized persons without its being by that very fact a sacrament.” For a Catholic marriage to be sacramentally valid, Canon 1108 maintains: “Only those marriages are valid which are contracted in the presence of the local ordinary or parish priest or of the priest or deacon delegated by either of them, who, in the presence of two witnesses, assists, in accordance with the rules set out in the following canons…” In other words, these canonical laws (1055 and 1108) are the main reasons behind Eucharistic famine in Mutare because African traditional marriage falls short of the requirements they stipulate.

In addition to the above canonical laws, there is also the Church’s teaching on the indissolubility of marriage. The doctrine of indissolubility of marriage is a serious reason why men in places like Mutare do not rush into a Church wedding, instead preferring a Shona traditional wedding. Traditionally, the newly married man and his family members would like to be sure that the young bride is fertile and productive. That is, that she has the capability to conceive and give birth to children. If the bride is not fertile and productive, the husband marries another wife that will bear children for him. With the Church’s teaching on unity and indissolubility, a man could not marry a second wife if he had wedded his first wife in the Church. Consequently, newly married couples in the Shona tradition prefer to delay the Church wedding so as to be very sure of the fruitfulness of their marriage. As long as they live in this state, that is, without a Church wedding, the Church regards them as ‘co-habiting’ and excludes them from receiving communion. The Church insists on the observance of these laws because as a spiritual institution, it makes and interprets its own laws. However, inculturation requires that the culture of a particular place be considered as well.

Having established the causes of Eucharistic famine in Mutare diocese, I now examine possible ways in which Eucharistic inculturation could help in solving this problem if it arises as a result of traditional marriage practices. I have established in chapter one that most of the Catholic sacraments are received in the context of Eucharistic celebration.
This is because the Eucharist is the center and summit of our Christian life as Catholics. That is why its inculturation in Mutare diocese is considered to be very important. What follows is a discussion of how to inculturate the Eucharistic celebration of marriage so as to reduce the problem of Eucharistic famine in Mutare. The first suggestion, already made, is to celebrate the Church and traditional weddings at the same time. The possible way of doing so is, after a detailed catechesis, to arrange with a priest to celebrate a wedding Mass on the day of the traditional wedding. This means that the day should begin with the celebration of the Mass, where the groom and his bride will exchange their matrimonial vows before the priest and two witnesses in the presence of the people of God.

After the nuptial blessing by the priest, the traditional wedding could begin later in the day. The emphasis would be to instruct the youths in Mutare to plan for these two weddings to take place on the same day. As a matter of emphasis, those preparing for marriage would have to be informed that the Catholic marriage does not allow divorce, which the traditional marriage permits. This will enable the new couple to differentiate between the Catholic and traditional marriages, even though they take place on the same day. As soon as the people themselves start to request for the integration of the two weddings on the same day, the Catholic Church in Mutare will, with permission from Rome, hopefully, be in a position to produce another marriage rite to take care of this type of marriage celebration.

The necessity of combining the traditional and Church weddings becomes a challenge in order to eradicate Eucharistic famine in Mutare diocese. Since an inculturated Eucharist advocates a return to the Last Supper event, where Christ gave his body and blood to all present, the universal Church, therefore, is challenged to reconsider the possibility of modifying those Church laws that prevent many Catholics from receiving Holy Communion. The Catholic hierarchy in Mutare is also challenged to facilitate the process of integrating the traditional and Catholic weddings. While this integration is anticipated, it is equally necessary for Catholics, especially the men in Mutare, to believe that God
alone gives life and children. This will help them to accept the Catholic Church wedding without fear of the indissolubility of marriage.

3.3.6 Ancestral Invocation and the Eucharist

Another challenge to be discussed in this chapter is the inclusion of ancestral invocation in Eucharistic celebrations in Mutare diocese. While this section relates to ancestors and their possible veneration during the celebration of the Eucharist, there is need to limit the discussion to some aspects of ancestorship. For instance, who are the ancestors and what are the criteria for being an ancestor; what is the relationship between ancestors and their families; how are ancestors honored; what is their importance; what reasons can be given for promoting ancestral veneration in the Catholic diocese of Mutare? Some suggestions will be given for the integration of ancestral veneration into Eucharistic celebration.

It will be helpful to begin by considering what the Bible says about ancestors and the place they occupy in our lives. The alternative Scripture reading at Mass on 26 July, when the Catholic Church all over the world celebrates the memorial feast of the parents of Mary, Saints Joachim and Anne, reads:

Let us praise illustrious men [and women], our ancestors in their successive generations. Here is a list of generous men [and women] whose good works have not been forgotten. In their descendants, there remains a rich inheritance born of them. Their descendants stand by the covenants and, thanks to them, so do their childrens’ children. Their offspring will last forever, their glory will not fade. Their bodies have been buried in peace, and their name lives on for generations. The peoples will proclaim their wisdom; the assembly will celebrate their praises (Sirach 44:1, 10-15).

Through this passage the Bible advises us to celebrate the ‘praises’ of our ancestors. Some African authors, like Bujo, Nyamiti and many others, have written extensively on ancestors. Instead of defining ancestorship, Nyamiti (1984:15) gives a picture of those who qualify to be ancestors in African tradition by saying: “No one can be regarded as an ancestor unless he led a morally good life on earth; for an ancestor is also a model of behavior for the living. He is, moreover, believed to be the source of tribal tradition and
its stability.” Those we regard as ancestors are those members of our families, especially those who led good lives and died natural deaths at ripe ages. They are known for the keen interest they still have in their families. Nyamiti (1984:9) records these qualities thus: “[A]ncestors are considered as mediators and intermediaries as well as guarantors of solidarity, stability and progress of the community of the living…”

An important characteristic by which ancestors are known is exemplarity. Nyamiti (1984:16) gives us a convincing reason why he regards ancestors as models for their living members: “The ancestor is a model of behavior not only because his earthly conduct was good, but because it is also the conduct of an ancestor, i.e., of the one who is both one’s own natural kin or relative, and one who is endowed with super-human condition and power.” This explains why Africans in general, and Zimbabweans in particular, look up to their ancestors for progress in life, protection from enemies, increase in crops, fertility in marriage, peace and unity in the family. Africans have this trust in the ancestors because they are believed to care for their family members. Bourdillon (1990:353) summarizes this cohesive and unifying work on ancestors in this manner: “Ancestors are symbols of the lineage group. When they are called upon in time of stress and tension, they provide a force for social cohesion.” Ancestors, it is believed, consider themselves honored when they are called upon to intervene at any given time in the life of their people. On the contrary, when they are neglected or forgotten by the living members of their families, it is believed, they become angry and they can go to any extent in punishing those who have neglected them by sending them misfortunes. The Zimbabweans are very much aware of this; so they do not make the mistake of offending their ancestors.

The philosophy behind the idea of venerating ancestors in Mutare is based on the belief Zimbabweans have about them. That is, they believe in the constant communion of the dead and the living. Pope John Paul II (1995:33) sees some meaning in this belief when he remarks: “It is precisely this love for life that leads [the sons and daughters of Africa] to give such great importance to the veneration of their ancestors. They believe intuitively that the dead continue to live and remain in communion with them.” The Pope does not
stop by re-echoing this belief of Zimbabweans. He (John Paul II 1995:33) goes one step further to ask a pertinent question: “Is this not in some way a preparation for belief in the communion of the Saints”? This question challenges all Catholics in Mutare diocese to work toward the incorporation of ancestor veneration in the celebration of the Eucharist. Such incorporation is important because of the role ancestors play in the lives of their living relatives. The role they play among their living relatives is the role of mediatorship.

Just as Catholics ask the saints to pray and intercede for them in the presence of God, in the same way Catholics in Mutare diocese could ask their ancestors to intercede for them at Mass, especially during prayers of the faithful. Referring to the ‘living-dead and the role they play, Mbiti (1969:83) remarks: “Because they are still ‘people’, the living-dead are therefore the best group of intermediaries between the [people] and God: they know the needs of [the people], they have ‘recently been here with [the people], and at the same time they have full access to the channels of communication with God…” The ancestors do not normally fail their living descendants, especially when the latter are in good communion with them. When the ancestors fail the living members of their village, they are reminded to their face how they have breached the trust placed on them. Ndiokwere (1994b:95) records a beautiful song of sorrow attributed to Awoonor-Williams in these verses:

…Agosu if you go tell them (ancestors)
Tell Nyidevu, Kpeti and Kovo
That they have done us evil;
Tell them their house is falling
And the trees in the fence
Have been eaten by termites;
That the Martels curse them.
Ask them why they idle there
While we suffer, and eat sand.
This is a beautiful poem put into song, expressing a heart full of sorrow as a result of disappointment because of the failure of the ancestors, who did not rise up to the expectations of their village members. This is also characteristic of a Zimbabwean pouring out his/her heart in prayer and petition. A Catholic whose life is threatened at home or at work places, or who is confronted with misfortunes, could render prayers like those of Awoonor-Williams during the prayer of the faithful at Mass. Thus it is important to incorporate ancestor veneration in the celebration of the Eucharist in Mutare.

Another reason why Shona people look up to the ancestors for help is the belief that since the ancestors lived good lives, they will continue to be good and also do good things for their family members. It is normal, therefore, for Zimbabweans to appeal to their ancestors by making reference to special duties they performed while they were alive. For example, Chaminuka, who was known for his ability to call down rain, is normally implored by the Shona people to intervene when there is drought in Zimbabwe. In his thesis, Chiromba (1988:89) records how those who resisted the colonial rule were asked to help during the liberation war:

During the struggle for the liberation of Zimbabwe from colonial rule, the names of Nehanda and Kaguvi became household names. The two led the first rebellion against colonial rule in the nineteenth century (1896-97) and hence their spiritual support was sought in the seven-year war, which led to independence and majority rule in 1980.

Communal help, which characterizes Shona culture, is always sought for even from the ancestors. The living dead, as some call them, will not stand and watch to see the living members of their families suffer, nor will the living relatives forget to ask for help from their ancestors when they are in trouble. In Zimbabwe, there is a belief that the ancestral spirits of those who died not long ago look after the immediate needs of their families. On the other hand, the great, grand-ancestors are deemed responsible for the greater needs of society on a national level. When there is war, drought and famine, or in times of national calamity, “these great, grand-ancestors are asked to intercede to the supreme God on behalf of the nation” (Chiromba 1988:89).
The communion between the ancestors and their living members is a strong bond that is not easily broken. The veneration of the ancestors is important to Zimbabweans because the living look to their ancestors as their models, whom they imitate. The latter receive both temporal and spiritual support from their ancestors and their communion with their ancestors helps to convince the living that life is important and that every good life has no end. From this discussion it becomes evident that the ancestors are seen as part and parcel of their living family members. It is necessary, therefore, for the Catholic Church in Mutare to examine possible ways of incorporating their veneration in the celebration of the Eucharist. One possible approach is through a thorough study of a rite such as the Zairean, so as to know what Catholics in Mutare could learn from that rite. It is on record that Rome has approved the Zairean rite, where Zaireans are free to invoke their ancestors in the rightful and Christian manner at the Eucharistic celebration. Referring to this rite, for example, Uzukwu (1982:61) remarks: “Since traditional cult is always conducted in solidarity with the ancestors, the Zairean Mass has two possible invocations of the ancestors in the faith as one of its preliminary ritual.” In other words, there is a special place in the Zairean rite where the ancestors are invoked.

Catholics in Mutare could learn from Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially about the steps to take in order to obtain the approval from Rome. This is one of the core challenges facing the Catholic Church in Mutare. It is important to obtain permission from Rome because of the unity of the Church that is universal and because of the allegiance each local Church owes to the Supreme Pontiff, who is regarded as Christ’s representative and ‘successor of Peter’.

In addition to learning from the Zairean rite, there is also need to formulate prayers with Shona traditional background addressed to ancestors, prayers which could be integrated into a suitable part of the Mass. In the formulation of prayers, Zimbabweans could also study some prayers from other African countries both as examples and in order to enrich theirs. For example, Lumbalala (1998:41) thus narrates a beautiful prayer in honor of African ancestors during a Mass celebrated in Paris:
Oh you ancestors of Zimbabwe, you who cultivate the banks of the Orange and Zambezi, you who have hunted the buffalo and antelope in the savannas of Twana and Shoto, you who have brought into the world the San, the Zulu... Be with us. And you our ancestors in the faith, you who in Ethiopia, North Africa, and Uganda have died in faith as followers of Christ, you Augustine, Lwanga and his companions, European and American missionaries who died in African land, be with us.

This prayer has a good combination of intentions because it invokes the ancestors from Africa, Europe and America. Though it is a generalized prayer, it could be adapted to the Eucharist celebrated in the Shona cultural context. Such a prayer, invoking Zimbabwean ancestors, should be recognized, approved and encouraged in the Catholic diocese of Mutare because it does not contradict any teaching of the Catholic Church. Moreover, it is not divisive in its style and nature. This type of invocation would be more meaningful to Catholics in Mutare, who know and understand the symbols used in their own context than symbols that are unfamiliar to them, especially those relevant to Europe. In this way the idea of an inculturated Eucharist would help our people develop a proper Christian attitude and understanding towards ancestors.

I would like to conclude this section with a suggestion made by Sipuka (2000:245) when he writes:

We want to suggest here that the appeal to the ancestors should be made in the context of the Eucharistic sacrifice so that there is one sacrifice that includes both God and the ancestors. Our line of argument for the inclusion of ancestors in the Eucharistic sacrifice is that like the saints, ancestors are with God, and therefore, it is legitimate to include them.

This is another challenge facing the Church in Zimbabwe in general and Mutare diocese in particular to make her presentations properly known to Rome so that permission could be granted to honor our ancestors when we celebrate the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. The incorporation of ancestor veneration in the celebration of the Eucharist is not only a challenge, it is also a worthy cause to embark upon because it will go a long way to encourage Catholics in Mutare diocese, especially those who despise their culture, to start again to value and appreciate it and, through it, manifest their faith authentically.
3.4 Conclusion
In attempting to inculcate the Eucharist in the Catholic diocese of Mutare, there is a need to explore the challenges facing the Church in embarking upon this noble cause. In the preceding discussion it has been argued that there are many such challenges, which the Church must address adequately if the inculturation of the Eucharist is to be real, meaningful and practical. In the first place, the age-old Christian division must be addressed so that a lasting solution may be found that will usher in harmony and unity that is symbolized by the unity of the Eucharist. To continue to celebrate the Eucharist while the members of Christ are divided is against the teaching of Christ when he says: “So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go, first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt. 5:23-24). Christ also prayed to His Father in these words: “… Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one” (John 17:11).

The Church is aware of these important teachings. Hence, she is making frantic efforts to see that the ecumenism that would bring about dialogue between various religions in general and Christians in particular succeeds. The need to celebrate the Eucharist in the context of the African family also challenges the Church in Mutare so much that she is expected to act like the mother of the family who sees to it that every member of the family is properly cared for. Consequently, there is need to reformulate the Eucharistic symbol to give it a broad-based perspective in order to enable it to include some of the cherished Shona cultural values. The Church is also challenged to consider seriously the use of Zimbabwean staple food and drink so that when the priest offers the gifts from the people, the offering may become meaningful to them as they will be able to convince themselves that the gifts offered are the products of their hands and from their own soil.

The existence of the extended family system is a blessing that the Catholic Church ought to adopt as a model in Eucharistic inculturation. The idea of celebrating as an extended family makes it compulsory for the Church to try and resolve the problem of Eucharistic
famine because in the Shona traditional family, no one is excluded during meals. Finally, it was affirmed that Mutare Catholics are in communion with their ancestors. The argument is, Since the Catholic Church recognizes the Saints, the veneration of the ancestors needs to be approved by Rome for the growth and maturity of the Catholic Church, especially in Mutare diocese. In all these challenges facing the Church, it was argued that there is hope that an inculturated Eucharist will help to root Christianity in Mutare diocese deeply in the culture of the people so that they can become mature Christians who are proud of their Shona culture in the Zimbabwean Church and in Mutare diocese in particular.

This chapter has tried to highlight not only the challenges facing the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese, but it has also, in anticipation, suggested some possible solutions. In the context of this discussion, culture is involved in one way or another. The next chapter examines culture and its implication for the Christian faith.
CHAPTER 4

UNDERSTANDING CULTURE AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR CHRISTIAN FAITH

4.1 Introduction

In our discussions so far on inculturation and challenges facing the Church in inculturating the Eucharist in Mutare diocese, it has been discovered that culture is not only a key element; it also plays an important role in inculturation. In view of the important role which it plays, it becomes necessary for us to devote a chapter to it in order to understand it more profoundly. Kraft gives us some of the reasons why it is important to understand culture well. Highlighting these reasons, Kraft (1985:391) has this to say:

For not only do the biblical and historical data with which theologians work come from other cultures, the world at our doorstep is increasingly multicultural in its makeup. And the problems it generates—problems to which theologians are expected to speak—are increasingly the result of relationships between peoples with differing cultural maps and agendas in their needs.

Kraft is right because most of the mistakes which the early Western missionaries made in mission lands came as a result of their ignorance and disregard of the culture of their host countries. This is an unfortunate situation, which Pinto (1985:21) describes as “the problem of inculturation.” According to Pinto (1985:21), “The problem of inculturation today is not with regard to faith and its contents as such, but with regard to the imposition of the cultural form it has acquired during the course of history, upon people, who have different cultures.” Anthropological studies in our present time have brought about new insights that emphasize the importance of culture. Through these studies, also, it has become possible to know such terms as patterning and culture-contact that make it possible for human beings to appreciate the roles culture plays in their lives. Thus, an understanding of anthropology is necessary for missionaries. A missionary, for example, needs to know the influence culture has on the people to whom he or she preaches the word of God. This is because faith comes through the proclaimed word of God. This

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word must be rooted in the culture of the hearers. The understanding of culture is equally important in our dealing with the faith-experience. Pope John Paul II stresses this point clearly by saying: “For its part, the faith needs to be part of cultural synthesis, because a faith which does not become culture is a faith not fully received, not entirely thought through, not faithfully lived” (see George 1990:44). In other words, there is a close relationship between faith and culture.

This relationship that exists between faith and culture is what Costa (1988:xiii) describes as “the symbolic exchange between the faith being preached and the receiving culture.” Hence, Paul tells us that “Faith comes through hearing; and hearing comes through the word of Christ preached” (Romans 10:17). On a similar note, Pinto (1985:19) maintains, “Faith is an answer to the word of God.” Thus, God reveals Himself and His plans through creation, through the history of salvation and in a more practical way in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus came into the world, lived and worked among people in a particular culture—an endorsement of the importance of culture. In order to demonstrate the importance of faith and culture, Pinto (1985:20) puts forward this strong argument: “So faith is lived, clothed, enveloped, expressed in a culture. A lived faith always has a cultural character. Faith cannot exist in a culture-free state.” With this argument, Pinto (1985:20) concludes: “A believer expresses his [her] faith in the culture he [she] belongs to.”

The aim of this chapter is to gain a better understanding of the meaning of culture, especially in its relationship with the Christian faith. The chapter begins by examining the concept and definition of culture. I also intend to examine other aspects of culture that are important for this study, with particular emphasis on cultural implications on the Christian faith especially in Mutare diocese. The chapter, therefore, is important for this study because a better grasp of the concept of culture is necessary for the understanding of inculturation. A proper understanding of Shona culture will enable Catholics to inculturate the Eucharist meaningfully in Mutare diocese. The implementation of
Eucharistic inculturation will be discussed fully in chapter nine. The immediate preoccupation of this chapter is to examine the concept and definition of culture.

## 4.2 Concepts and Definitions of Culture

Writing in 1985, Pinto explains the concept of culture as follows:

> The concept of ‘culture’ is about a century old. It was first developed in the later 19th century by the socio-anthropological school of England and later by that of the United States and France. The study and the research still continue and there is no unanimous definition of culture as such. Several scholars have attempted to define culture. Alfred L. Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn have put together a variety of definitions and notions of culture in their book, *Culture: A critical Review of Concepts and Definitions* (1985:5).

Here, Pinto not only tells us of the origin and development of the idea of culture, but he also highlights the significant role played by the socio-anthropological school in the development of this concept. Kraft also recognizes the role of anthropology in the development of the concept of culture. He also (1985:394) asserts: “The first area in which anthropological insight could be of help to theology would be … the understanding of culture.” It is by defining culture and understanding what it represents that we can come to a better understanding of it. On the other hand, it is important to note that there is no definition of culture that is universally accepted. Some authors have given reasons why this is so. Keteyi (1998:19) explains these differences in these words: “In part, the differences are due to the fact that there are many disciplines that study the life of the people. Each approaches culture in a different way placing stresses that are important for its interest.” This is an important observation by Keteyi, though he is not alone in this regard. Crollius is also blunt when he asserts that it is highly impossible to have one definition that satisfies everybody. Crollius (1986:47-48) affirms:

> It is difficult to see how one single concept of culture could satisfy all those who speak about it. Any attempt to clarify the term ‘culture’ on the level of this ‘interdisciplinary no-man’s land’ would almost certainly fail to gain the approval of most of the participants in the discussion, in so far as they choose to remain immured in their own, particular conception of their own, particular discipline.
Both Crollius and Keteyi agree that the difficulty of arriving at one single definition of culture stems from the fact that there are many disciplines studying culture. Each discipline has its own way of looking at it so as to be able to interpret the actions of human beings in any given situation. It becomes obvious that many definitions are expected. Consequently, Shorter (1999: 34) states: “Kroeber and Kluckhohn list 164 definitions of culture.” Geertz (1973:4), an anthropologist, assembles some of these definitions and arranges them in this orderly form:

Kluckhohn managed to define culture in turn as: (1) The total way of life of people; (2) the social legacy the individual acquires from his group, (3) a way of thinking, feeling and believing; (4) an abstraction from behavior; (5) a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behaves; (6) a store house of a pooled learning; (7) a set of standardized orientation to current problems; (8) learned behavior; (9) a mechanism for the normative regulation of behavior; (10) a set of techniques for adjusting both to the external environment and other men; (11) a precipitate of history…

 Granted that Kluckhohn worked hard to put down these definitions, it is also certain that they may not be able to satisfy the aspirations of many who are studying culture from different angles and perspectives. Surely, Kluckhohn himself would not assume that he has exhausted all possible avenues that could lead to further definitions of culture. Geertz (1973:5) expresses the same sentiment in this remark: “Kluckhohn himself keenly realized an improvement. Eclecticism is self-defeating not because there is only one direction in which it is useful to move, but because there are so many: it is necessary to choose.” Hence it would appear that it is necessary to choose. In other words, variety is the spice of life.

Taylor was one of the earliest anthropologists whose definitions are widely quoted by many authors. It is not surprising, therefore, that in his introductory remarks on the definitions of culture by Taylor, George (1990:138) reports:

The first technical anthropological definition of culture was given by E. B. Taylor in 1871. Culture or civilization… is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief,
art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.

Considering the time when this definition was given, it is classical because it still meets the expectations of our sophisticated modern time. This definition is a foundation on which many others sprang up. In his definition, Taylor also stresses the important place human beings occupy in society. It can be said, therefore, that culture is what human beings learn or acquire as members of society. Azevedo (1982:10) highlights this fact in this way: “Culture, therefore, is the deepest code to reveal a human, social group and to make it understandable. On the other hand, it is culture that gives a concrete human group the meaning of life.” The emphasis here is on the identification mark through which people in society are known, that is, their culture and cultural heritage. Shorter (1997: 4) explains this better in these lines: “According to this way of thinking, it is what human beings share culturally, their customs, values and distinctive way of living, that constitutes them as a recognizable distinct human group or society.” That is, it is the culture of a particular society that distinguishes it from other societies. Emphasizing the importance of this identification mark by which each society is known and recognized, Azevedo (1982:10) elaborately illustrates:

To summarize, what I am suggesting here is that we eventually take culture proper as the set of meanings, values and patterns which underlie the perceptible phenomena of a concrete society, whether they are recognizable on the level of social practice (acts, ways of proceeding, tools, techniques, costumes and habits, forms and traditions), or whether they are the carriers of signs, symbols, meanings and representations, conceptions and feelings that consciously or unconsciously pass from generation to generation and are kept as they are or transformed by people as the expression of their human reality.

In this quotation, Azevedo sees culture not only as meanings and values, but also as a social practice and more importantly as a carrier of those essential human traits that distinguish human beings in society. He goes further to add that culture is transmitted from generation to generation, consciously or unconsciously. Any culture that is not passed on from generation to generation will die off. In other words, each individual must learn and live his or her culture for that culture to survive. It is here that we recognize the importance of enculturation. Thus, culture is dynamic, not static. The United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) gives a definition that tries to go beyond the social dimension characterizing culture as we have seen so far. George (1990:153) carefully records this definition thus:

In its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex or distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only arts and letters, but also modes of life, value systems, traditions and beliefs… It is culture that gives man [woman] the ability to reflect upon himself [herself]. It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings, endowed with a critical judgment and a sense of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices. It is through culture that a man [woman] expresses himself [herself], becomes aware of himself [herself], recognizes his incompleteness, questions his achievements, seeks untiringly for new meanings and creates works through which he [she] transcends his limitations.

As an Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO tries to be more broad–minded in its definition of culture so as to include the four dimensions of a human being, namely, spiritual, physical, intellectual and emotional. A closer look at the above definition shows that culture enhances these four dimensions of life through arts, value systems, traditions, beliefs and fundamental rights of human beings. Thus, UNESCO affirms that everyone has a right to his or her culture, which can never be denied him or her. This definition stresses the fact that culture makes us human. In other words, we are expected to develop our capabilities in these four dimensions so as to be able to pass critical judgments, make right choices, discern values and even question our own capabilities. In effect, culture, seen from this perspective, goes beyond peoples’ mode of eating, dressing, marrying and so on.

For this reason, Shorter (1997:4) asserts: “Culture is therefore not simply about behavior.” Rather, it is a total way of life for all human beings. Geertz could not think of human nature as completely independent of culture. Instead, we become complete through culture. As Geertz (1973:49) puts it: “We are, in sum, incomplete, or unfinished animals who complete or finish ourselves through culture.” The implication of Geertz’ statement is that people will remain incomplete as long as a culture different from theirs is imposed on them, because they will not have any opportunity to determine their own
way of life. It is necessary, therefore, that people should preserve and transmit their own culture from generation to generation in order to remain unique with their own cultural heritage. Both Shorter (1997:5) and Geertz (1973:89) agree that one way of transmitting culture is through symbols. The essence of this transmission is not only for the mere preservation of culture, but also for development and change. Some of the characteristics of culture that are derived from the definitions we have seen so far include the following:

(a) Culture is the social heritage of a group of people.
(b) Culture is a set of meanings and values expressed and transmitted through symbols.
(c) Culture is learned, not inherited.
(d) Culture is dynamic not static.

Schreiter suggests two possible ways of determining the authentic characteristics of culture. According to him (1985:43), “First, any approach to a culture must be holistic. This means that it cannot concentrate solely on one part of a culture and exclude other parts from consideration.” Indeed, some of the definitions we have examined try to consider these various aspects of culture as they affect human beings while others are limited in scope with regard to their definitions. Schreiter (1985:43) proceeds to insist: “Second, any approach to culture must be able to address the forces that shape identity in culture.” This is also a valid point because we have already emphasized the importance of an identity of a given society that is specifically known by its culture. For example, the different tribal marks in Nigeria help to identify an Igbo as different from a Hausa or a Yoruba. This identification is important to people of the same culture because it gives them a sense of belonging in society. However, this should not be allowed to make people reject others who are different from them. Otherwise, their culture will not grow for lack of interaction with others. People are encouraged to mix and learn from one another so as to enrich themselves and their culture in their uniqueness.
In all the definitions, society is very central. In other words, it can be said that culture and society go hand in hand. Pinto (1985:5) describes society as: “a permanent organized aggregate of persons sharing a common way of life and group consciousness.” Therefore, each human society possesses culture and tries to transmit it from generation to generation. In this way, culture becomes what Pinto (1985: 5) calls: “a society’s standardized way of coping with different environments.” It must be emphasized here that culture is not genetically inherited. Dhavamony (1997:41) makes this clear when he explains: “Since culture is acquired, it is important to exclude genetically inherited characteristics.” The various definitions of culture discussed in this section enable us to proceed to examine other aspects of culture.

4.3 Culture and Symbolism

In our effort to understand culture, another important term to be examined is ‘symbolism.’ Symbolism in this section will be discussed in relation to culture: the relationship between culture and symbols and the place of symbols in community worship, especially in the Eucharistic celebration. Both Dhavamony (1997) and Shorter (1998) trace the origin of the word “symbol” to the Greek word Symbolon. This Greek word, which is translated into English as symbol, means, “to put together.” In order to illustrate how symbol puts things together, Shorter (1998:54) explains: “In other words, it puts together image and context, convention and invention”. This statement, it seems, prompts Dhavamony (1997:52) to regard a symbol as something with a ‘double face’ in the sense that “it reveals something that cannot be expressed conceptually, but at the same time it conceals that thing because it can never be its adequate expression.” In a way, we can say that there is sense in what Dhavamony and Shorter are saying here, because when a thing cannot be expressed conceptually, it is put in the form of an image that becomes a convention. Neither Dhavamony nor Shorter provide concrete examples of how a symbol puts things together. A discussion of symbolism in a community can help to illustrate how a symbol does this. As a definition of the word symbol, Dhavamony writes:
A symbol is something regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought. A symbol is something that stands for something else (1997:52).

Crockett (1989:79) has a similar idea, which he expresses thus: “A symbol is something that represents, signifies or points to something in experience while not being identical with what it represents.” Both Crockett and Shorter agree that a symbol acts as a pointer, whereby it directs peoples’ attention to what it represents. On the other hand, Dhavamony implies that it is the people who make use of the symbols who determine its value and meaning. Culture comes in here. This, perhaps, explains why Geertz defines culture in relation to symbols. According to Geertz (1973:89), “culture denotes a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men [women] communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life”.

In view of this, symbols are important assets to culture. An illustration of what is meant by this is a situation in Igboland, in Nigeria, where a kola nut is a symbol of peace and unity. A kola is a rounded nut with two or more lobes that could be divided or broken into many small pieces to serve many people present in a gathering in Igbo communities. The symbolic meaning of a kola nut can only be appreciated in Igboland. If a Kola nut leaves Igboland and comes to Shona culture, it loses its symbolic meaning. This symbolic meaning in Igboland is that of peace. Where two families were quarreling and subsequently reconciled, a kola nut is brought and broken into pieces for all the people involved to eat together as a symbol or sign of togetherness and peace.

Similarly, food also has a symbolic meaning for many different communities in Zimbabwe as well as some other countries in Africa. In the following illustration Ekwunife uses Igboland as an example of a place where food has a symbolic meaning:

In the first place, throughout Igboland, traditional eating is a sacred activity which is intimately associated with life. To share food with someone is to communicate one’s life to the other. But to refuse to share is a signal for cessation of life perceived in terms of interaction among beings of Igbo world. Hence, one of the punishments the husband can give his wife in Igboland is to refuse her food. No further gospel is needed for the wife to
comprehend the situation. Some form of ritual, often with a Kola nut is needed to normalize [the] relationship (1990:152).

In these two examples—food and kola nut—we can see that culture and cultural values are fully manifested through symbols. The symbols used have meaning and relevance to a particular community in a society. Shorter (1997:34) is thus correct when he says: “Symbols are essential to a culture.” In this regard, symbols make cultural values more real. In the same vein, it can be said that symbolism is the basic mode of cultural education as in the case of a husband refusing to eat his wife’s food.

It must be emphasized here again that the meaning of any symbol depends to a large extent on particular cultural contexts and traditions. Feeley-Harnik (1994:11), commenting on the symbolism of food and eating among the Arabs and the Israelites, carefully records the following statement:

The very act of eating and drinking with a man was a symbol and a confirmation of fellowship and mutual social obligations… Those who sit at meat together are united for all social effects, those who do not eat together are aliens to one another, without fellowship in religion and without reciprocal social duties.

He masterly highlights the social and religious functions of symbols in a society. That is, he stresses the symbolic role of unity and fellowship through eating and drinking as prevalent in both the Arabs and the Israelites. Eating together is also a symbol of unity among Zimbabweans. In fact, eating and drinking together as symbolic of unity and fellowship puts a big question mark on the practice of depriving some people of Holy Communion at Mass in the Catholic Church while others are allowed to receive it. The implications of such denial of Holy Communion to some Catholics have been discussed in chapter three under “Eucharistic famine”. For the moment, it suffices to affirm that symbols have both cultural and religious undertones.

Dhavamony (1997:53) is correct when he asserts: “Every religious act, as it is religious, is endowed with a meaning which, in the last instance, is symbolic, since it refers to
supernatural values or beings.” This statement can be exemplified with the Paschal Candle in the Catholic Church, which symbolizes Christ as the light of the world, who has come to disperse darkness and to bring light into the world and into the life of every Christian. The symbolic meaning of the Paschal Candle can only be appreciated by Catholics or by those other Christians who attach the same symbolic meaning to it. In the Catholic Church, the Paschal Candle is blessed on the Easter Vigil and it is reverenced because, symbolically, it stands for Christ as the light of the world. In sum, we can say that symbols play an important role in the effective understanding of culture, including religion. In this context Geertz (1973: 128) tells us: “The power of the symbol, analyzed or not, clearly rests on its comprehensiveness, on its fruitfulness in ordering experience.” This means that symbols are meaningful only to those who use them in a particular context. That is, they cannot be dictated arbitrarily. Symbols are instances of experience that cannot be over emphasized.

There is a certain kind of relationship between symbol and sign. For Shorter (1998: 53), “symbols are a species of sign”. In agreement with this statement, Dhavamony (1997: 54) makes the following distinction between a symbol and a sign:

Every symbol is a sign because it intends something beyond and stands for something; but not every sign is a symbol because a sign says what it means by positing the signified; the symbol says something more, it leads to the mysterious behind the symbol.

Dhavamony illustrates this distinction with a flag and a street signpost. A flag is a symbol of a nation. An attempt to burn it, is regarded as an insult to the nation that owns that flag. On the other hand, any attempt to distort a street signpost, though punishable by law, will not be considered as an insult to the nation or even to the street where it was put. At other instances it may not be very easy to make a clear distinction between a sign and a symbol. As already indicated earlier, a symbol has a ‘double face’, whereby it reveals something and at the same time conceals it. A typical example to illustrate a symbol that reveals something and at the same time conceals it is the ‘baptismal water.’
Water as a symbolic substance is described by *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia* (1991:967) in these words: “The symbolic use of water is found throughout Old Testament Jewish religious practice in such ceremonies as the setting apart of priests (Ex 29:4 Lev 3:6; Num 8:7)… and in the ablutions before meals” (Mk 7:3). As a natural substance, water symbolizes ‘purification,’ and it is used to wash away dirt. At the same time, when it is used at baptism, it conceals the inward grace it confers on the newly baptized. Cooke (2004:143), describing what happens at baptism, recalls: “One goes down into the water (as a sign of Jesus’ death) and then emerges from it (as a sign of Jesus’ risen life”). The newness of the baptized person cannot be seen outwardly except by faith and also by the person’s good deeds. As a conclusion, Cooke (2004:144) maintains: “The symbol of water baptism points also to Christ’s incorporation of this person into his new risen existence.” Since cultural symbols such as those just described are meaningful to those who use them, culture can, therefore, be used as a means of communication as explained in the next section.

**4.4 Culture as Communication**

Having discussed culture at some length in the previous sub-sections of this chapter, it is now possible to examine the various ways in which culture serves as a means of communication. Communication in general means the ability to convey a message, information or an idea to someone or to a group of people. Grandfield (1994:3) defines communication thus: “In its broadest sense, . . . communication means sharing, interacting, participating, conversing and exchanging information.” A consideration of culture as communication is necessary because we cannot talk of the cultural implications of the Christian faith without talking about the transmission of this faith, which involves communication. In this section, I intend to examine instances where there is communication among cultures, the various ways through which cultural values serve as means of communication and, finally, the implications of culture for our Christian faith, especially in Mutare diocese, where we hope the celebration of the Eucharist will become meaningful to the people through inculturation.
Fruitful communication among cultures must be in the form of dialogue. In order to emphasize the importance of this dialogue in communication, Crollius (1986:62) explains: “This dialogue is, itself, a culture fact or ‘symbol.’ Its ‘meaning’—one might use here the word ‘logos’—consists precisely in the formal characteristic of its being a mutual communication of diverse meanings, a dia-logos.” It is through dialogue that the symbolic meanings are understood. I put my stress on the word ‘understood’ because cultural values must not only be communicated but also understood. Communication reaches its fruitfulness when it is understood. Crollius (1986:62) stresses the importance of communication and dialogue in this statement:

The purpose of communication is not to cancel the diversity of the various meanings in making them coalesce into one single meaning. Rather, in and through the dialogue, the originality of the diverse meanings becomes manifest.

Dialogue, in this case, encourages mutual understanding and this mutual understanding brings about an enrichment of two or more cultures. In this process of dialogue, both the originality and the distinctiveness of each culture is respected. Crollius (1986:62) stresses this point in this statement: “In their very originality, cultures are communicable and their universality can only be conceived as a communion of distinct and diverse cultures.” In this regard, assimilation is not a good method of communication between cultures because it excludes dialogue. In African countries, for example, where assimilation was practiced by some of their colonizers, the people and their culture were assimilated into their colonial master’s culture. Consequently, they were expected to behave like their colonizers in all aspects of life. Furthermore, assimilation has the tendency of ignoring the riches of originality and creativity in assimilated cultures. The consequence is the impoverishment of both cultural and human values. As a precaution, therefore, we must guard against any form of univocal conception of cultures. Crollius (1986:62) foretells the effect of such a conception: “In the encounter among cultures such a conception would bar the way to dialogue, leaving room only for a monologue.” The absence of monologue means that there is no cultural imposition. That is, no culture has the right to impose its own norms and ideals as universally valid. That is why dialogue is necessary. Furthermore, dialogue is important in the communication of cultures because it checks
the excesses of cultural relativism and cultural domination. On the other hand, cultures can serve as vehicles of communication to human beings in society. In order to encourage communication by using cultural values, Instrumentum Laboris (1993:106) has this to say:

Those means which lie close to oral culture, of such importance at all epochs in Africa and in the Church, are particularly worth using—song, story, proverb, dance and short pieces of drama woven integrally into catechesis and liturgy.

In other words, every aspect of culture, like art, literature, music, artifacts, rituals, and so on, as well as whatever symbolism that goes with culture, can be regarded as a carrier of meaning. When this meaning is properly understood, communication has taken place. In Zimbabwe, for example, when traditional music is used in liturgical worship, especially in the Eucharistic celebration, it helps everyone to participate and at the same time it bonds people to their cultural roots. In this way culture, through music, serves as an effective means of communication to human beings. The same is applicable to language, which plays an important role in human communication. Hence, in our Eucharistic celebration, the vernacular is used for effective communication.

Thus, the messengers of the good news must appreciate the importance of culture and the significant role it plays in communication. The Word of God will not be effective in the life of the people if it is not properly communicated to them through their culture. Culture, therefore is equally important in the growth of the Christian faith. Pinto is very much aware of the implication of the relationship between culture and faith as he (1985:22) states:

The relation between faith and culture is twofold. Faith influences culture and the services rendered to it. Faith enables culture to develop new aspects of faith-expression, providing a home and a garment for faith. Faith inspires, purifies and humanizes culture. On the other hand, culture offers services to faith, especially in its social diffusion; for example, through art, poetry, philosophy, etc.

This is an effective way of expressing the relationship between faith and culture in a symbiotic and artistic form. In effect, the last part of this quotation from Pinto
summarizes what we have said so far about communication. It is on this note that I consider what Bate (1993:258) says to be valid when he affirms: “Together with Tomaselli, Kraft, Lubetak, Schreiter and those who follow a semiotic approach, we affirm that culture is fundamentally communication.” Bate (1993:258) goes further to explain why he regards culture as communication in this statement:

> We affirm, then, an understanding of culture as communication and say that people share a culture to the extent that they communicate or understand one another and that they do not share a culture to the extent that they misunderstand and fail to communicate with one another.

Communication is not only important for our social interaction, it is also necessary for our religious worship, where culture plays an essential role through its symbols. Through this communication, Christian faith is validly imparted and culture continues to grow and to become dynamic. The Christian faith must be transmitted within a cultural context which most often has some implications.

### 4.5 Cultural Implications for the Transmission of the Christian Faith

It was observed earlier that culture must be transmitted from generation to generation if it is to survive. In the same way, Christians in general and Catholics in Mutare diocese in particular must keep their faith alive by handing it on from generation to generation. While attention here is focused on how Christians propagate their faith and the role culture plays in this transmission of faith, it is equally important to explain what faith stands for among Christians. *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia* (1991:392) gives the following illustrative explanation:

> The term ‘faith’ has an objective and a subjective sense: (1) it refers to the body of saving truth contained in the scriptures, creeds, Conciliar definitions, teaching of the Magisterium and writings of the doctors and saints of the Church (*fides quaer creditur*); (2) it refers to the subjective acts and disposition by which these doctrines are believed (*fides qua creditur*).

A Christian shows his/her faith by professing it. A possible way of professing or propagating the faith is by evangelization. Pope Paul VI (1975:29) gives us the synthesis
of the relationship between the Gospel, the evangelizer/evangelized and the culture in a remarkable teaching as follows:

The Gospel, and therefore evangelization, are certainly not identical with culture, and they are independent in regard to all cultures. Nevertheless, the kingdom which the Gospel proclaims is lived by men [women] who are profoundly linked to a culture, and the building up of the kingdom cannot avoid borrowing the elements of human culture or cultures (Evangelii Nuntiandi of Pope Paul VI No. 20).

In other words, both the evangelizer and the evangelized have their cultures, which could be expressed in various ways in order to enrich the Gospel. However, it must be emphasized that the evangelizer must not impose his or her culture on the evangelized. The contents of the message are expressed through tradition, arts and poetry, which carry along with them the cultural traits of those involved. This point is illustrated by Pinto (1985:22) through the twofold relationship between faith and culture in the quotation already cited above. (see P. 81)

In our Eucharistic celebration, it is proper that we express our living faith through hymns, arts, poetry and our whole philosophy of life. In fact Vatican II, in Ad Gentes (No 21), encourages the faithful to express their faith through their culture when it states: “They must give expression to this newness of life in their own society and culture and in a manner that is in keeping with their own land. They must be familiar with the culture, they must purify it and guard it, they must develop it…” That is, the Shona culture, for example, must manifest itself in the Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese. It is only when a given culture manifests itself in the religious celebration, especially the Eucharist, that the celebration can become meaningful and interesting to the worshiping community. Furthermore, Vatican II makes the link between the Gospel and culture clearer as follows: “There are many links between the message of salvation and culture. In this self revelation to his people culminating in the fullness of manifestation in his incarnate son, God spoke according to the culture proper to each age” (Gaudium et Spes 1966, No. 58).
The implication of this declaration of Vatican II is that God speaks to us through our own culture. Therefore, we must manifest our faith through our own culture as we celebrate the Eucharist in our country. Pinto’s (1985:27) warning is important when he remarks: “One cannot respond to [the] Christian message in his [her] total life, if it is presented in another cultural form. It would be totally ineffective and alienating.” Culture is dynamic and powerful. It can also appear resentful when it is made to appear alien to its recipients. This is a challenge to the Church, whereby it must re-examine its past method of evangelization. Norbert and Norbert (1994:21) explain why some celebrations do not speak to the hearts of some Christians in these words: “That is because without these conditions of integrity and participation, the culture that the faith is inculturated into is fundamentally alienating to the people and so cannot speak to their hearts and minds.”

From this discussion we can summarize the cultural implications for the transmission of the Christian faith thus: The first implication focuses on the evangelizer who is reminded not to impose his or her culture on those to be evangelized. The second implication is for the evangelized to be proud of their own culture, to guard it tenaciously and to manifest it in their whole life activities, especially in their religious celebrations. In other words, Catholics in Mutare should not be shy or discouraged to use their culture in religious activities and celebrations. Chupungco (1982:78) has a useful advice for those who hesitate to use their culture on the grounds that it is not properly developed when he states: “To begin with, the notion of a developed culture is relative. As soon as cultural forms like rituals, language, and art are able to express adequately a particular genius, culture is ready to be taken up into the realm of Christian worship.” It has become abundantly clear that there are different cultures in the world and among Christians.

Therefore, the Church should encourage unity in diversity. It is not right to do away with other people’s cultural values for the sake of uniformity. Instead, those outstanding cultural values must be respected, preserved and integrated into the Christian message. Thus, the Gospel is not opposed to culture.
The incarnation theory is not only central to the theology of inculturation, but it also serves as an important and useful means of transmitting the Christian faith. It serves as a vehicle of transmitting Christian faith when its relationship with culture is well explained and accepted. In other words, Christians uphold the central teaching of incarnation in the words: “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jn 1:14). That is, the incarnate Son of God dwells among the people and their culture. It becomes necessary that the Christian message must be infused into the culture of the people to make their celebration meaningful. Hence, it is appropriate to conclude this discussion with Pinto’s (1985:27) assumption in the light of incarnation theory:

Hence, just as Jesus at the incarnation assumed, in principle, the entire human nature, the Christian message, in the process of inculturation, ought to assume all that is good and positive in a culture, so that man [woman] can meaningfully respond to it in faith.

The Christian message which has, for example, become deeply rooted in Shona culture, manifests itself in faith experiences among Catholics in Mutare diocese. These faith experiences show themselves through meaningful Eucharistic celebrations where everybody participates. The importance of participation in every Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese is a necessity, as will be shown in chapters eight and nine. The cultural implications of the transmission of the Christian faith also serve as the principal factors in Christian missionary activities. It is thus reasonable to affirm that culture has a significant role to play in the transmission and growth of Christian faith. Hence, culture is dynamic—it is praxis.

4.6 Culture as Praxis

From all the various aspects of culture we have examined in the previous sections of this chapter, it is clear that culture is praxis—or active. That is, culture is dynamic. In a more subtle way, Pinto (1985:5) reflects: “Thus all cultures change, though some may change faster than others. Completely static cultures are dead ones.” In other words, culture is not static. Instead, it is dynamic. Evidently, this discussion has shown that culture is not merely an abstract concept. Crollius (1987a:93) confirms this statement thus:
“The usage of culture has the advantage of turning from the abstract to the concrete where the concrete means men and women.” Borrowing the word ‘concrete’ from Crollius, we can say that culture becomes more concrete during the enculturation and acculturation processes. Hence, Chupungco (1982:82) remarks: “Concretely, acculturation would mean inducing a change or a modification…” Certain elements are involved in this process of change. Chupungco (1982:82) explains these elements as follows: “Particular elements of culture which render this type of acculturation possible and effective are values, idiomatic expressions, maxims and proverbs.” Shorter agrees with Chupungco in the listing of these elements and sees them as forming a cluster. According to Shorter (1998:23), “A culture is therefore a dynamic cluster of concepts and norms, the form of which is historically specific.”

Culture is not only dynamic in itself, but it is also active in terms of raising peoples’ social and political consciousness. Bate is very much aware of this functional aspect of culture. Hence he is able to situate it properly in the South African political context. Describing the political situation in South Africa under the apartheid regime, Bate (1993:243) states: “Here culture, largely perceived as the arts, is seen as a means of consciousness raising: for us culture must be a weapon that we use effectively to raise the awareness of the people about their sufferings.” It becomes obvious, in the minds of Bate and other South African authors, Muller, Tomaselli, and others, for example, that culture as praxis, is capable of bringing about social transformation.

While Bate regards culture as praxis and active from the point of view of raising peoples’ social and political consciousness, culture is understood as praxis in this section in order to re-enforce awareness of the importance of inculturation in our time. That is, the primary aim is to inculturate the Gospel in the Zimbabwean Church. Therefore, it must be affirmed that culture is praxis and it is alive, not dead. Its liveliness is vibrantly manifested in the Eucharistic celebration, as will be illustrated in chapter nine. The goal is to make Catholics in Mutare diocese conscious of this lively and meaningful Eucharistic celebration, as well as to encourage them to participate actively at Mass.
When Catholics in Mutare diocese become conscious of the importance of a lively Eucharistic celebration, brought about by inculturation, they will be ready to manifest their faith every time, and anywhere. This is the essence of incultrating the Eucharist, where culture plays a significant role in the understanding of faith.

4.7 Conclusion

This discussion of culture has stretched out far. I have examined such topics as the definition of culture, where I highlighted and examined some definitions; culture itself and symbolism, where I stressed the importance of symbols. I also examined the relevance of culture in terms of communication. Here I identified the principle of dialogue as an essential method of communication and a means of checking the excessive tensions that might result from cultural domination or cultural relativism. I affirmed that culture, as communication, is important for social interaction and for religious worship, through which Christians manifest their faith. After examining the cultural implications for the transmission of Christian faith, I maintained that culture must not be imposed at all, either on the grounds of superiority or of uniformity. From the preceding discussion it was possible to affirm that culture is praxis, and thus dynamic. That is, culture is not dead, but rather it is alive.

This chapter, consequently, has enabled us to understand culture and its implication for Christian faith. One aspect of culture which keeps it alive is the fact that it is transmitted from generation to generation. This transmission of culture from one generation to another helps people to maintain their identity. In the same manner the Catholic Church received the celebration of the Eucharist from Christ through the Apostles. Many centuries have passed since the Church started celebrating the Eucharist and she continues to celebrate it today, even in Mutare, in line with what Christ said, “Do this in memory of me.” The next chapter traces the place of the Eucharist in the New Testament in relation to inculturation.
CHAPTER 5

THE EUCHARIST IN THE NEW TESTAMENT: THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF TRADITION FOR INCULTURATION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter four dealt with ‘culture and its implications for the Christian faith.’ While culture is an important concept for inculturation, faith plays a pivotal role in the understanding and celebration of the Eucharist. With the discussion of ‘faith and culture’ in chapter four a reasonable background has been laid for us to proceed to a discussion in chapter five of the Eucharist in the New Testament (NT), as well as its meaning and implication for inculturation. The central theme of this chapter, therefore, is the Eucharist in the New Testament in relation to ‘inculturation.’ It will be important to bear in mind that the word ‘inculturation’ as understood in the present African context was not used in the New Testament.

In trying to gain an understanding of the meaning and significance of the word ‘Eucharist’, an effort will be made to determine if it contains traces of some cultural traits that point to inculturation. The aim of chapter five, therefore, is mainly to highlight the significance of Jesus’ actions and gestures at the Last Supper and how they relate to inculturation. In order to achieve this aim, a brief biblical and theological analysis of the word ‘Eucharist’ is necessary. From this analysis, I will identify the cultural values that come to the fore so as to determine the roles they play in the understanding of the Eucharist and its inculturation. The significance of tradition in the promotion of inculturation will also be examined. In my analysis I will also outline the basic catechetical principles that could facilitate the promotion of inculturation in Mutare diocese. Thus, a critique of current approaches to catechetical instructions is necessary. The Bible, especially the New Testament, will be used as my primary source in both analysis and discussion throughout the chapter. Other sources will include commentaries from Biblical exegetes and theologians on such areas as the Eucharist, its related actions and gestures at the Last Supper, catechetical principles, inculturation and tradition.
5.2 The Meaning of the Eucharist in the New Testament

This section presents the views of various scholars on the Eucharist as found in the NT and in the Church’s teachings. Feeley-Harnik (1994:1) not only guides us on where to look for the Eucharist in the NT, but he also gives a comprehensive and scholarly overview on the Eucharist in the following statement:

The Eucharist, the meal of bread and wine that commemorates the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is one of the central sacraments of Christianity. Also known as the Lord’s Supper (Caena Domini), the Lord’s Table (Mensa Domini) and the Lord’s Body (Corpus Domini), it derives from the descriptions of the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his disciples collected in the Gospels and letters of Paul, in which thanksgiving (eucharistia), in the Greek of the New Testament, played a large part.

This quotation from Feeley-Harnik is comprehensive because in it he states the origin of the Eucharist, the meaning, its other names, what it commemorates and where it is documented and found. On the multiplicity of names, The Official Catechetical Text (1999:7) records: “[The Eucharist] is a mystery with a thousand facets and multiplicity of names—meal sacrifice, memorial, Mass, all of these names fitting the gift which Jesus has given us, but none of them is exhausting its meaning.” While Feeley-Harnik describes the origin of the Eucharist and what it commemorates, and the Official Catechetical Text presents the various names by which it is known, the Encyclopedia of Theology focuses on the actions of Jesus, that is, the sacramental events that are important in this chapter. In an attempt to recapture these sacramental events, the Encyclopedia of Theology (1975:447) provides this summary:

Eucharist is the designation for the sacramental meal of the Church celebrated according to the example and instruction of Jesus, a designation appearing as early as the 1st century and predominating ever since. The word expresses fundamental insights into the nature of the action. The term, which derives from the ‘thanksgiving’ of Jesus at the Last Supper (Lk 22:19; 1Cor.11:24; Mk 14:23; Mt 26:26) means, … the ‘proper conduct of one who is the object of a gift …’

In both Feeley-Harnik and the Encyclopedia of Theology, the word ‘thanksgiving’ is emphasized. This is because the word “Eucharist”, which cannot be found in the NT, is derived from it. The verb ‘to give thanks’ (eucharistein), which gave rise to “thanksgiving” or “Eucharist,” is found in the Gospel of Luke (22:17) and in Paul’s letter,
1 Corinthians 11:24. Clark (2000:8) also states: “The word Eucharist comes from a Greek word meaning “thanksgiving.” Similarly, “thanksgiving” is equivalent to the Jewish ‘berakah’, the meaning of which Emminghaus (1978:24) describes thus: “Every Jewish meal, especially … the meal on the Sabbath, characteristically began and ended with a thanksgiving (berakah), that is, with a prayer of praise over the bread and at the beginning of the meal and over the wine at the end.” It is necessary to give thanks for what is given and received. When the Eucharist is celebrated, Catholics thank Christ for giving them his body and blood as food and drink to nourish them.

The Encyclopedia of Theology (1975:448) gives a clearer explanation of the word ‘thanksgiving’ in this illustration: “Thanks always presupposes a gracious gift, which is in fact only real through thanksgiving, where alone the gift is effective and present.” The gift of Christ to Christians in general and Catholics in particular in the Eucharist is always effective because it is believed that he transforms the lives of those who receive him. He empowers them to proclaim him as their Lord as well as to adore him in the Blessed Sacrament, which is referred to as Christ’s ‘real presence’. It is proper, therefore, to give thanks to God through our Lord Christ whenever the Eucharist is celebrated. LaVerdiere (1996:1-2) explains how the word ‘Eucharist’ came to be used by the early Christians in these words: “The name ‘Eucharist’ first appears in a collection of early Christian writings known as the ‘Apostolic Fathers.’ The oldest attestation is in the Didache (9:1) in the heading for a set of blessings for community meals…” It must be noted that the ‘Didache’ as a document is an early Christian work by an unknown author, written around AD 60 in Syria.

In order to answer the question ‘how’ and ‘why’ did the Church adopt the word “Eucharist”, the Official Catechetical Text (1999:49) has this to say: “The term Eucharist was adopted in reference to the prayer of thanksgiving pronounced by Jesus for the consecration of bread and wine.” Since the verb ‘to give thanks’ (eucharistein) is found in the Gospel of Luke (22:17), it is supposed that the Church adopted ‘Eucharist’ as a cognate of ‘eucharistein.’ With this analysis, Clark (2000:9) concludes: “The Eucharist
seems to be the most universally accepted term… and it’s the term in the catechism of the Catholic Church.” Bouyer (1996:15), in turn, affirms: “The Eucharist especially is the most original creation of Christianity.” Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:368), in addition to the various explanations given above, highlights the sacramental and meal aspects of the Eucharist in the lines already cited above. (see P.90).

The ‘meal-food’, aspect of the Eucharist is clearly brought out in the above explanation. It is important that this aspect is well highlighted in order to give the word ‘thanksgiving’ its significant meaning. The meal aspect of the Eucharist will be discussed more fully in chapter six. The significance of a meal and food, and the need to thank Christ for giving his body and blood as food, is explained in the Encyclopedia of Theology (1975:448) thus:

> In the case of the Church’s sacramental meal, it is the salvific reality placed therein by Christ, which is Christ himself with his being and work. This reality is acknowledged with praise in the words of grace at meals uttered over and in the gifts of food.

Though the word ‘Eucharist’ did not appear in the NT, its meaning ‘of thanksgiving’ is important to this section because it expresses gratitude to God for the gift of Christ and to Christ for the gift of his body and blood as eternal food. In Shona culture, as will be explained in chapter seven, ‘thanksgiving’ as a cultural expression could serve as an element of inculturation. This means that the Catholic Church in Mutare can adopt this Shona cultural expression of gratitude to enrich the Eucharistic celebration in the diocese. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that Catholics are right to adopt the word ‘Eucharist,’ in order to thank Christ for sacrificing his life to save his followers and to nourish those who receive his body and blood. Whether it is called the ‘sacrifice of the Mass,’ ‘Communion,’ the ‘Memorial,’ or the ‘Meal Sacrifice,’ it is the same Eucharist where thanksgiving is expressed for the precious gift of Christ.

5.3 Catechesis of the Eucharist: An Aid to Effective Inculturation

In chapter one, it was pointed out that one of the problems facing the Catholic Church in Mutare is lack of proper understanding of the Eucharist as a result of poor catechesis.
In order to address this problem, it is necessary to devote a section in this chapter to examining how proper catechetical understanding of the Eucharist could lead to effective Eucharistic inculturation. Mutiso-Mbinda (1986:76) has this to say about catechesis in his discussion on ‘Inculturation and Catechesis’: “It is in the area of catechesis that we find the challenge more urgent. The failure to inculturate catechesis and Christianity as a whole condemns our people to living a divided Christian life…” If lack of proper catechesis on the Eucharist is a problem, and failure to inculturate it makes Catholic Christians live a ‘divided life’ (Mutiso-Mbinda), its discussion in this section is quite relevant and appropriate. Sacrosanctum Concillium chapter 1 article 6 of Vatican II is very clear on the importance of Eucharistic catechesis when it declares:

The catechesis of the Eucharistic mystery should aim to help the faithful to realize that the celebration of the Eucharist is the true center of the whole Christian life both for the universal and for the local congregation of that Church. For the ‘other sacraments, as indeed every ministry of the Church and every work of the apostolate, are linked with the Eucharist and are directed towards it…’

The responsibility to make this Eucharistic catechesis properly understood falls primarily in the hands of priests and the other lay catechists of the Church. Insisting on this noble work meant for the pastors of the Church, Sacrosanctum Concillium chapter 1 article 15 states:

Pastors should therefore gently lead the faithful to a full understanding of faith by suitable catechesis… It should clarify their meaning and especially that of the great Eucharistic prayer, and should lead the people to a profound understanding of the mystery which these signify and accomplish.

In order to facilitate this Eucharistic catechesis and its understanding, the catechesis of Eucharistic inculturation is very necessary in Mutare diocese. It is hoped that suggestions made here will help to bring about effective Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese. Besides, the need for proper catechesis on Eucharistic inculturation is one of the implications anticipated to emerge from the theme of this chapter.
Eucharistic Catechesis in the context of this section refers to Catholic teaching and learning about the Eucharist that brings about a deeper Eucharistic understanding and enhances its inculturation. For Paul, catechesis refers to “oral instruction, a handing on of all that has been received from Christ” (1 Cor. 11:23, 15:13). If catechesis refers to the ‘handing on of all that has been received from Christ’, and the Eucharist is one of his great gifts, I intend to argue that inculturated catechesis of the Eucharist is important in Mutare diocese for proper understanding and deepening of faith. This section will be discussed under the following headings:

- Theological interpretations of the Eucharist
- A critique of current catechetical instructions
- Catechetical possibilities on Eucharistic inculturation.

5.3.1 Theological Interpretations of the Eucharist

There is need to examine the various aspects of the Eucharist as presented by theologians in order to determine the lessons that can be learned from them for better inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. In order to identify these various aspects, a look will be given at some related chapters of the Gospels. The Gospel of Mark played a significant role at the early stages of Christianity. LaVerdiere maintains that Mark tells the story of the Eucharist as a reference point so as to help the early Christians accept the Gospel as an important message from Christ. In order to emphasize the importance of the Eucharist in the Gospel of Mark, LaVerdiere (1996:48) has this to say:

Mark told the story of the Eucharist because it was an important part of the Gospel; but even more importantly, he told the story because the community was in a period of crisis. The Eucharist would help them see the implications of the Gospel at an important juncture in their history.
Moloney (1997:32) sums up the purpose of Mark’s Gospel in this text:

Indeed, with the Gospel of Mark I will argue, on the basis of my understanding of the narrative, that the original readers of this Gospel, the members of an early Christian community, had lost their way in understanding the Eucharist. The story of the Gospel both summoned them to a more committed Christian life and comforted them in their difficulties and failures.

The catechetical lesson from Moloney’s analysis is that a proper understanding of the Eucharist enables Catholics not only to persevere in their difficulties but also to remain committed in following Christ as Catholics. For this proper understanding of the Eucharist to be realized, every catechetical text on the Eucharist must be free of abstractions. Illustrations used in the lessons must be applied to the various developmental stages of human growth and should be based on their cultural context. This is one possible way that will make catechesis beneficial to its recipients. Chupungco (1992) thus explains the importance of culture in catechesis as follows:

The resources owned by the liturgy will have relevance and value for catechesis only if they are able to evoke various life situations, if they are in fact rooted in the culture of the local church. In short, a liturgy whose expressions are not inculturated has little to offer to a living and effective catechesis.

Furthermore, a proper understanding of the meaning and significance of the Eucharist is helpful when Catholics become aware that the Eucharist is related to the incarnation of Jesus. Interpreting John’s theology of the Eucharist in relation to incarnation, LaVerdiere (1996:113) comments:

In John, the Eucharist is related primarily to Jesus’ incarnation, the Word of God made flesh, inviting Jesus’ disciples, indeed all who believe, to be one with him as he and the Father are one. For John, the Eucharist was above all the sacrament of Jesus, the incarnate Word of God, dwelling among us as God’s personal revelation.
The catechetical lesson here is that the Eucharist is an invitation to Catholics to put their faith strongly in Christ and to be one with him as Christ is one with God the Father. In the language of inculturation, the call is on those who receive Christ in the Eucharist to allow Christ to be incarnated in them so as to make them new creatures. Speaking of this reciprocal activity—Christ in people and they in him--John (6:56) makes this clear in these words: “Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me and I in them.”

The understanding of this incarnation doctrine becomes easily understood when the Christian faith is integrated into Shona culture as well as in the lives of Catholics in Mutare in their own settings. Matthew and Mark told the story of Jesus feeding the crowd; that is, the miracle of the loaves. While Mark presents the two stories of Jesus feeding the crowd in the context of teaching, Matthew presents his in the context of Jesus healing the sick. Mark (6:34) states: “As he [Jesus] went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.” Matthew (14:14) has a slightly different version in this form: “When they went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion on them and cured their sick.” In the context of this feeding, Jesus presents the lessons of a compassionate teacher and healer.

5.3.2 A Critique of Current Catechetical Instructions

If the catechetical lessons identified above are to become more practical and fruitful in Mutare diocese, there is need to “inculturate Eucharistic catechesis” in the diocese. The present catechism and catechetical method used by the Catholic Church in Mutare diocese was inherited from early Western missionaries. While it is important to appreciate the effort and sacrifices they made at that time to teach Catholics in Mutare, it is also a fact that the method they used was not suitable for Shona Catholics. It did not take into account the cultural and traditional values of the people they evangelized. Consequently, the evangelization of the people did not contribute to the formation of their real life, with the effect that Catholic lives are currently based on double standards.
Reacting to the catechetical method used by early missionaries, Chiromba (1988:126) has this to say: “Some missionaries taught the Bible as they understood it with little knowledge of, and little consideration for traditional religious beliefs.” Lamenting the absence of inculturated catechesis during the missionary era, Mutiso-Mbinda (1986:76) also reports: “The failure to inculturate catechesis and Christianity as a whole condemns our people to living a divided Christian life” In the first place, the present catechism is a translation from a translation. That is, the English from which the catechism was translated was not the original language of the text. Commenting on the limitation of translation with regard to prayers, Magesa (2004:239) has this to say: “As translations from English of prayers originally composed and written in Latin, the prayers for the celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments rarely capture either the style or the spirit of African praying.” Magesa’s observation is correct and it also applies in the field of Eucharistic catechesis. On the question of the meaning of the Eucharist, for example, The St. Peter Catechism of Catholic Doctrine (1972:46) states: “The Holy Eucharist is a sacrament and a sacrifice in which the true Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ are really present, offered and received under the appearances of bread and wine.” The translation from the Shona Catechism Book (1989:84) reads: “Sacramende reyukarisiya sande ndiwo muviri chairo neropa chairo raJesu Kristo, pamwe nomweya nouMwari hwake muzvioneko zvechingwa newaini.”

As a translation, the Shona version tried to be true to the English version by maintaining some words like ‘reyukarisiya’ and ‘newaini’ to resemble those of English. In spite of this attempt to retain the meaning of the English version, it has some limitations because it lacks the originality of the text and this explains why it retained some English words. Secondly, the Shona catechism amounts to memorizing or committing to memory what was learned, with the intention of producing a verbatim answer because it is translated from another language. Finally, it fails to incorporate the cultural aspects that are familiar to the people. Since it has no illustration based on Shona culture, those who teach catechism without proper catechetical training simply read the passage and ask the candidates to recite and memorize it. This type of learning is not helpful because it is not rooted in the life of the learner. Consequently, as soon as the candidate is through with
the sacrament he or she wants to receive, he or she forgets what was learned. This is a problem which inculturation should address. The need for an inculturated catechesis of the Eucharist is therefore necessary and urgent in Mutare diocese.

5.3.3 Catechetical Possibilities on Eucharistic Inculturation in Mutare Diocese

This section explores various possibilities that could enhance inculturated catechesis of the Eucharist. The need to inculturate catechesis of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese is necessary and urgent if Christianity, and specifically the Eucharist, is to be deeply rooted in Zimbabwe. Chupungco (1992:169) thus explains the meaning of catechetical inculturation and what it involves: “It means that the cultural pattern, system of values and symbols and traditions of the local Church, which have already been absorbed through inculturation by the liturgy, are made available to catechesis.” It is inculturation that makes catechesis of the Eucharist more fruitful because it enables the faith not only to grow, but also to be permanent in the lives of Catholics in Mutare diocese. Any attempt to evolve a well standardized and inculturated form of catechesis is a worthy cause that must be embarked on. Crollius (1987:10) gives a meaningful overview of an inculturated approach to catechesis when he affirms:

> Inculturation enables the Church to listen and then speak with and not only to the people of today in a language that expresses through signs and symbols, their genuine religious reality and lived religious experiences: their values and hopes; their problems and needs.

This means that an inculturated approach to catechesis must consider the needs of the people in their totality: cultural, physical, intellectual, spiritual, material and temporal needs. The followings are some of the suggestions intended to facilitate an effective inculturation of the Eucharist, through an inculturated approach to catechesis, in Mutare diocese. It is first necessary to consider the findings of experts in different fields. Chupungco (1992:135) highlights some of these findings thus:

> We are also aware that many psychologists and sociologists express the view that our contemporaries have passed beyond a culture of the word, which is now ineffective and useless, and now live in the culture of image. If this view is correct, catechesis, too, must shift from a culture of word to a culture of image.
In order to make this ‘culture of image’ practical, Mutare diocese can learn from neighbouring countries so that it can enrich its Eucharistic inculturation through catechesis. For example, the image of a carved tabernacle from East Africa, with an African cultural background, can be of great help in teaching and learning about respect for and the preservation of the Holy Eucharist in the tabernacle. The sight of a tabernacle in the form of a granary has an important cultural significance. Describing the place of the ‘granary tabernacle’ and its symbolic meaning for the Eucharist, Healey and Sybertz (1996:269) comment:

> For the tabernacle itself the African artists chose the symbol of a granary which is found throughout Africa in a variety of forms… The supporting column is planted right in the middle of the [African] village, symbol of the Christian community. This is to signify that while the Eucharist is the source of life of the Christian community, at the same time it is the expression of the communion and self-giving experience in the community.

An image such as the ‘granary tabernacle’—a replica of Shona local huts, when printed in catechism books, is likely to be self-explanatory and could have a more lasting impression on many Zimbabwean Catholics, especially children, than any volume of a book based merely on words. A granary tabernacle is possible because in Shona culture the granary huts where harvested cereals are stored and preserved are common features in rural areas. In fact, many homes in rural areas in Mutare diocese are built in the form of ‘round huts.’ To integrate the Church’s understanding of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle, for example, into Shona culture or cultural image, will not only impress the Catholics but will also enable them to understand and appreciate the importance of the Eucharist in their lives. The sight of the Blessed Sacrament in a tabernacle made in the form of a granary, would remind Shona Catholics that truly ‘God is with them.’ In order to facilitate such a deeper understanding of the meaning and significance of such a tabernacle in relation to the Eucharistic catechesis, few explanatory notes could be helpful because the image is almost self-explanatory. (See photo below).

Another method of bringing images to bear good fruits in the minds of Catholics in Mutare is through the use of modern technology that uses slides reflective of African culture. Through the use of slides adapted to Shona culture, for example, lessons on the Eucharist can be easily communicated to different age groups. For Magesa (2004:245),
therefore, “The electronic media can be a very effective means of inculturation.” The need for an inculturated approach to catechesis of the Eucharistic is not only important, but also urgent. I thus consider Mutiso-Mbinda’s suggestion (1986:77) vital when he makes the following recommendation: “In the field of catechesis, presentations better suited to the African [Zimbabwean] soul can and must be made, while at the same time taking into account the more and more frequent cultural exchanges with the rest of the world.” The use of cultural images and technology in teaching catechism needs human beings who can provide proper and effective catechesis of an inculturated Eucharist.

While missionaries have provided the motivation for the need to inculturate the Eucharist through catechesis—using technology, for example, the indigenous people have the greater task of carrying the work forward. In order to facilitate a proper catechetical approach that is well rooted in peoples’ culture, Dhavamony (1997:117) observes:

*Catechists, by knowing the essential components of these cultures and learning their most significant expressions, will be able to offer these cultures the knowledge of the hidden mystery and help them to bring forth from their own living tradition original expressions of Christian life, celebration and thought.*

Trained catechists are suitable people for imparting an inculturated Eucharist because from their experience, they know how to communicate the message so as to enable the faith to penetrate the lives of Catholics in Mutare diocese. The essence of employing the services of trained indigenous catechists for imparting an inculturated Eucharist is to ensure that the faith taught to Catholics becomes part and parcel of the people, thereby transforming and ennobling their everyday ordinary life. A catechist that is capable of effecting such a change acts as the animator of the Catholic community, which he must bring together and steer towards living an authentic Christian life.

The emphasis is on ‘trained catechist’ because no one gives what he or she does not have. Unfortunately, many catechists during the missionary era and even during the present age, are not properly trained and so they are not qualified to undertake an inculturated approach to catechesis of the Eucharist.
Hastings (1967:224) spotted this deficiency and he describes it in this way: “They [catechists] were simply co-opted from among their fellow villagers and given some elementary duties to perform.” In Mutare diocese, for example, most of the catechists are volunteer workers, without any proper training. As Chupungco (1992:170) warns, “when the liturgy does not arm catechists with the kind of instruments needed to evoke cultural setting, they are frequently left to their own arbitrary devices.” The cultural setting mentioned by Chupungco is necessary because it facilitates learning through vivid images. In order to be able to interpret the cultural settings and the images they present, catechists must be adequately trained. Lumko institute in South Africa is one of the appropriate institutions in Southern Africa for training catechists in order to qualify them for such noble work. In order to promote effective catechesis of the Eucharist through an inculturated approach, consequently, the missionaries and the local people must cooperate and work together, while the indigenous catechists are to be properly trained and prepared for the task.

5.4 The Place of Tradition in Inculturation Strategies

Tradition has a significant role to play in the preservation of religion as well as in perpetuating important doctrines of any particular religion. In its ‘Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation’ ‘Dei Verbum,’ No. 8, Vatican II has this to say: “The Church, in its teaching, life, and worship, perpetuates and hands on to all generations all that it is itself, [and] all that it believes.” McBrien (1966:63) describes kinds of tradition thus: “Those traditions may be oral (preaching), liturgical (prayer formulae), narrative (recollection of important events, especially Jesus’ passion), and so forth.” What follows is a survey of the role played by tradition in the promotion of inculturation in the Catholic diocese of Mutare.

5.4.1 Tradition in the Christian Context

The term ‘tradition,’ as it is used in this sub-section, suggests the ‘handing over or handing on’ of an important practice, doctrine or instruction from generation to generation. This handing over can be oral or written. *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia* classifies Christian tradition into two divisions. It (1991:939) states:
Tradition is divided into two areas: (1) Scripture, the essential doctrines of the Church, the major writings and teachings of the Fathers, the liturgical life of the Church down through the centuries; (2) Customs, institutions, practices which express the Christian Faith.

The two divisions of tradition have a direct relationship to religion and religious practices. In a religious connotation, Shorter describes Christian tradition as ‘sacred.’ For Shorter (1997:65), “Sacred Tradition concerns the truth about Jesus. It is the testimony to that truth which is preserved in unwritten form and in the inspired writings of scripture, and which is the subject matter of dialogue with culture…” Tradition is also an aspect of culture that must be harnessed. Describing this category of tradition, Shorter (1997:33) has this to say: “Tradition constitutes an inherited body of meanings and conceptions clothed in symbolic forms and this inheritance is called culture.”

This sub-section will attempt to analyze the role played by tradition in its biblical context and to examine how it manifests itself in both religious and cultural dimensions so as to determine how it could facilitate inculturation. It will also help us to understand how the Eucharist has been celebrated in the past and how it is being handed down from generation to generation. Schreiter (1985:32) captures the role of tradition in theological discussion as follows:

Yet those theologies that have survived down to the present time have survived for a reason: they expressed with some degree of adequacy the experience of believers. That gives them some measure of enduring validity for local communities today, as touchstones and sometimes measuring rods for their own experience.

Paul’s teachings on the Eucharist, especially on the importance of preserving and handing over the true tradition, justify Schreiter’s statement because tradition preserves the originality and identity of the message received. Jesus’ words at the Last Supper, “Do this in memory of me,” imply that Jesus was handing over an important feast or a practice to his disciples, which he wanted them—his disciples—to continue celebrating. Benoit’s
(1965:82) comment on the words ‘Do this in memory of me’ indirectly implies a ‘handing over.’

The disciples would not have dared to repeat this action to which they attached such great importance, if they had not received express instructions from their master to do so. And what is more, their master clearly wished by this rite to prolong his presence among his own, even after his death and return to his Father: for this it was essential that the rite be repeated.

Benoit’s comment implicitly highlights some essential features of tradition, such as continuity, repetition and obedience in carrying out instructions. These features are clearly brought out by Paul in his Eucharistic theology, in Corinth, where he declares:

For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body that is [given up] for you. Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way he took the cup also, after Supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

In the Jerusalem Bible, 1 Corinthians 11: 23 begins with a clear mention of the word tradition. “For the tradition I received from the Lord and also handed on to you…” From this passage Paul recalls the power of tradition, which he encourages the Corinthian community to uphold and cherish. He wanted to see the continuity of the tradition handed on to the Christian community in Corinth. This explains why he handed it on to the Corinthians exactly as he received it. It could be assumed that Paul did not permit any behaviour in the form of celebration that would devalue the rich and authentic tradition, which he was proud to hand on to posterity. Recalling the power and the importance of tradition, LaVerdiere (1996:29) argues: “Paul knew the formative power of tradition… Like names and liturgical formulas, traditions matter. They express and reinforce a community’s identity.”
Some of Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper, for example, ‘taking bread,’ ‘giving thanks,’ and ‘breaking bread,’ are repeated at every Eucharistic celebration as part of the Christian tradition. These actions that have formed an essential part of Catholic tradition, express vividly the Church’s identity wherever the Eucharist is celebrated. In no circumstance is this important tradition omitted or broken in the Roman rite. The consequence of any unilateral decision to abandon or devalue an accepted and recognized tradition is disastrous. Both Moloney and LaVerdiere lament the deviations in the Corinthian community during Eucharistic celebrations. LaVerdiere (1996:42) describes the emptiness of Corinthian Eucharistic celebration thus:

At Corinth, the words and gestures have become empty because the Corinthian community no longer did what Jesus did. Their Eucharist was no longer a remembrance of Christ’s passion and resurrection, no longer expressed what he did ‘on the night before he was handed over.’ As such, the community was no longer acting as a link in the chain of Eucharistic tradition, handing on to others what has been handed on to them.

The emphasis is on breaking the ‘link in the chain of Eucharistic tradition’. Because the Corinthians abandoned the tradition handed on to them, Paul saw their celebration as a mere private affair that had no reference to the Lord’s Supper. The Eucharistic tradition had prevailed and survived to this day because it is a genuine tradition and it was derived from Christ himself. Christ, who gave the tradition, lived it and expressed it in gestures and actions. In order to preserve this tradition in its originality, the followers of Jesus must imitate him with life testimony. The Encyclopedia of theology (1975:1730) explains this life testimony in these words: “The words and signs of the apostolic testimony [life testimony] form the permanent basis of Christian tradition.” In other words, Christians are called to live a life of total commitment where their actions speak more than words. In order to be good disciples of Jesus, Christians must follow his footsteps, and also imitate him. That is why Paul in Galatians 6:17 exclaims:

“For my part, I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.” Paul understands the true meaning of this ‘life testimony;’ that is why his whole life was a total life of commitment to Jesus in preaching and suffering.
By implication, the Corinthians failed to be good disciples of Paul and also of Jesus because they failed to obey the instruction given to them that was enshrined in the tradition. They deviated because they wanted to do their own thing in their own way. Consequently, their celebration was characterized by greed. When the celebration of the Eucharist becomes an individual and private affair, it is not only characterized by greed, but it also threatens the unity of the Church for which the Eucharist stands. It must be pointed out that there are some traditions that are retrogressive and non-functional. No one in his or her right mind will promote a retrogressive tradition. It is also a fact that some people abandon even genuine and recognized traditions. It is not a part of this study to examine reasons why people abandon recognized traditions.

5.4.2 Tradition and Eucharistic Inculturation in Mutare

I proceed to examine how tradition can help to promote Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese. In the first place, for example, just as Paul was proud to hand on to the Corinthians what he received from Christ, that is, Christian and cultural traditions, Catholics in Mutare must be proud to promote the culture they received from their forebears and also hand it on to posterity. Rich cultural values like Shona language, hospitality, the extended family system, respect for elders, the veneration of ancestors, and many others, are to be incorporated into the Eucharistic celebration in inculturating it. Any inculturation that intends to survive the test of time must be permanent in the life of the local people. It is by integrating the Eucharistic celebration into the cultural values of the people that inculturation will be made permanent in a local Church and in the life of its members.

In his article, ‘Inculturation—the Meaning and the Challenge’, Gittins reviews a variety of strategies that may be adopted toward effecting inculturation. Some of the current strategies reviewed by Gittins (2000:28) are prescriptive inculturation, dynamic equivalence, creative assimilation, organic program and synthetic approach.
Prescriptive Inculturation is that method or approach that legislates, decrees and controls the teachings and practices on inculturation. The ideas and instructions come from authorities above and outside instead of coming from inside. One reason those who favor prescriptive inculturation give is the necessity to maintain unity. However, they must not forget that there is unity in diversity. Therefore any insistence on unity that condemns people to a state of conformity is not helpful. Lamenting the adverse effect such unity brings to the local Church, Gittins (2000:29) comments:

> Unfortunately, such unity tends to manifest itself as lock-step conformity or bland uniformity, which rather undermines any putative commitment of the Church to diversity or respect for cultural forms. Because prescriptive inculturation does not proceed authentically from the local Church (bishop and faithful), it proves not to be [of] deep or lasting value.

Since prescriptive inculturation does not last and since it does not remain permanent in the lives of Catholics in a local Church—Mutare diocese, for example,—it cannot be an ideal method for the Catholic there. In other words, ‘prescriptive inculturation’ cannot foster effective Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese.

In dynamic equivalence, the starting point is on Christian teaching, practice or liturgies found in the lives of those who first brought the Gospel to the local Church. This approach insists on formal equivalence, that is, a ‘word for word’ translation of liturgical texts. To realize this ‘word by word’ translation, dynamic equivalence insists on finding equivalent words to be used in translation in other languages. This explains why some words like ‘Bredi,’ ‘Waini,’ ‘Sacramenti,’ and so on, are used so that they reflect the literal translation of the original words in English or Latin as the case may be.

Dynamic equivalence leads to formalism. For this reason, it is also not an ideal approach for inculturation because it does not promote creativity that is necessary in inculturation.

Creative assimilation accepts those cultural practices that are not already part of the Church’s tradition and then endorses them. This approach is similar to adaptation, which
the African bishops described as inappropriate for African Churches. For example, the Inter-Religious Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA) has this to say about ‘adaptation’. “It is a method which does not take local culture seriously and a subtle way of keeping Western values and attitudes and trying to perpetuate them.” For IMBISA, therefore, ‘adaptation’ is not appropriate. Shorter (1997:189) also describes ‘adaptation’ as inadequate in these words: “For the development of the concept of inculturation, the Synod of 1974 was crucial. Until that moment, the inadequate notion of ‘adaptation’ prevailed.”

On the other hand, Organic progression permits novelty and creativity. It must be stressed that though it encourages creativity, it also advocates prudence in the attempts that lead to novelties. It encourages people to discover the richness of their culture so as to integrate them in their celebrations. Organic progression is an approach that could be tried in inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese because it encourages creativity and paves the way for the discovery of the richness of a local culture. Finally, the synthetic approach to inculturation does not favour any single method. Instead, it encourages the use of many methods that are available. It is better to use as many methods as possible because, as an on-going process, inculturation involves every member of the Catholic Church to take part. Furthermore since cultures as well as circumstances where the Gospel is preached differ, varieties of approaches are required for different situations.

In view of the approaches discussed it seems necessary, as well, to consider incorporating Groome’s foresight in any inculturation approach. Groome sees the Christian attempt at inculturation as ‘a dialectical encounter.’ Groome (1994:121) states:

As an ‘encounter,’ it is a two-way-exchange—from ‘Gospel’ to culture and from culture to ‘Gospel’—and as ‘dialectical,’ it reflects a threefold dynamic of affirming and cherishing, of refusing or questioning, and of moving on to new and transformed possibilities for both ‘Gospel’ and culture.

Stating clearly the reason for upholding the notion of dialectical encounter, Groome (1994:122) declares:
I describe inculturation more precisely as a dialectical encounter between Christian faith and a particular culture in which the culture is affirmed, challenged and transformed toward God’s reign, and in which Christian faith is likewise affirmed, challenged, and enriched by this unique instance of its realization.

The idea of ‘dialectical encounter’ rules out the prescriptive approach that imposes its own rules and regulations on the local Church and its culture. Any approach that favours dialogue between culture and the Gospel is on the right path and could be welcomed at any time by any local Church. The dialogue between the Christian faith and the local culture must be mutual and reciprocal. It is also appropriate, at this stage, to examine the role some cultural values play in the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation.

5.5 Importance of Cultural Values in Eucharistic Inculturation

The cultural values to be examined here, though applicable to other continents, are drawn mainly from Africa and specifically from Shona culture. This section aims to bring to light the essence of culture in any given society. It has an important place in the study because it provides an explanation to Eucharistic inculturation as illustrated in the New Testament analysis of the Eucharist.

Cultural values represent those aspects of culture that are important to a particular group of people. For example, Pope John Paul II (1995:33) has the richness of African cultural values in mind when he remarks:

> Although Africa is very rich in natural resources, it remains economically poor. At the same time, it is endowed with a wealth of cultural values and priceless human qualities which it can offer to the Church and to humanity as a whole. The Synod Fathers highlighted some of these cultural values, which are truly a providential preparation for the transmission of the Gospel. They are values that can contribute to an effective reversal of the continent’s dramatic situation and facilitate that worldwide revival on which the desired development of individual nations depends.

The Pope not only recognizes the richness of African cultural values, but he also points out the contribution they could make in the world. These values cannot fulfill the Pope’s expectations if they are not explored, properly harnessed and promoted by Africans.
themselves. I regard the Pope’s statement as a challenge to Africans in general and to theologians in particular. This section identifies some Shona cultural values, discussing their importance and suggesting how they can help in the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese. Those to be discussed here include:

- The use of proverbs
- The extended family system/Familial solidarity
- The sense of community life
- The sense of hospitality.

5.5.1. The use of Proverbs

The use of proverbs in speaking is an aspect of language. The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (1989:700) defines language as: a “System of sounds, words, patterns etc., used by humans to communicate thoughts and feelings”. Language is also a “system of signs, symbols, gestures etc., for conveying information”. Describing the importance of language to human beings, Dhavamony (1997:63) states:

Language or speech is an essential part of the incarnate Spirit in the world. The human word is the human reality itself as it manifests itself in outward expression. It is a way of being human. To come into the world is to begin to speak. The word is one of the most typical means of human encounter. What a man [woman] is comes to light through language; and through it he [she] directs himself [herself] to another person. Language is essentially an opening of oneself to another, a revelation of oneself to another.

Language is so powerful and important that it is learned from infancy. Describing the power and influence of language, especially the mother-tongue of a child, Olagoke (1979:15) maintains: “It is the language in which the child has acquired his [her] first experiences of life, the one in which he [she] dreams and thinks, and in which he [she] can easily and conveniently express his [her] feelings and emotions”. The language a child speaks first is that of his/her mother tongue and it is called the ‘vernacular’. Language is not only important for social communication, it is also necessary for religious celebrations. Though the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (*Sacrosanctum
Concilium (1966) of Vatican II, No. 36, encourages the preservation of the Latin language in the Church, it also favours the use of the vernacular in liturgical celebrations:

But since the use of the vernacular, whether in the Mass, the administration of the sacraments, or in other parts of the liturgy, may frequently be of great advantage to the people, a wider use may be made of it, especially in readings, directives and in some prayers and chants.

With this admonition from the Council Fathers, it becomes incumbent on Catholics in Mutare diocese to put into full use not only the Shona language in the celebration of the Eucharist, but also the application of proverbs in preaching and sharing the word of God, for better communication and proper understanding of it at Mass.

The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1989:1009) proceeds to define a proverb as a: “short well-known saying that states a general truth or gives advice…” Onwubiko (1991:31) uses the language syntax of two dominant language groups in Nigeria to illustrate how proverbs could be used for stating facts and for giving advice: “The Yorubas,” he writes, “say that proverbs are horses we ride to search for truth. In another way, the Igbos say that proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.” This means that proverbs are used to teach important values that reflect the ways in which a society sees itself. This fact is well expressed in the following statement recorded by Healey and Sybertz (1996:35):

Proverbs are a mirror in which a community can look at itself and a stage on which it expresses itself to others. They describe its values, aspirations, preoccupations and particular angles from which it sees and appreciates realities and behaviour. What we call mentality or way of life is best pictured in them.

Every society expects its own members to know its proverbs. This is because proverbs are a way of life that characterize a society. Proverbs are important to those who make use of them because they place their users at an advantage. A visitor, for example, hardly understands the proverb of the host community. That is why it is unusual for an adult person in Shona culture, for example, to expect an explanation of a proverb used in a
conversation. It is presumed that, as a member of that culture, he/she should know the meaning and message a particular proverb conveys. Hence it is said: ‘Only a fool or a visitor asks for the explanation of a proverb.’ Onwubiko (1991:31) stresses the importance of knowing and understanding the meaning of proverbs in these words: “In short, the use and understanding of proverbs mark the adult usage and maturity in a language.” That is why Jesus was surprised when his disciples could not understand the parables he used in his teaching. In Mark 4:13, Jesus asked his disciples: “Do you not understand this parable? Then how will you understand all the parables?”

Shona language is replete with proverbs, known as tsumo. Like every other language in Africa, Shona language uses proverbs (tsumo) for speaking and teaching different aspects of life. Proverbs are used to teach honesty, integrity, hospitality, righteousness, self-control, generosity, respect, solidarity, fear of God and many other virtues that characterize human beings. It becomes imperative, with this in view, to challenge Church leaders in Mutare diocese to encourage the use of proverbs in both catechesis and in Eucharistic celebrations. They are very important for inculturation because if they are well adapted to Shona cultural context, they can play a similar role to that which parables played in Jesus’ teachings. Shorter’s advice (1999:107) on the importance of proverbs is quite helpful: “Proverbs and riddles offer possibilities in the field of religious education and catechetical instruction. However, once again, attention has to be paid to the essential meaning of the African text, rather than to any superficial similarity”. They can be of great help in providing better catechetical understanding of the Eucharist.

This is possible when those Shona proverbs that talk about community sharing, eating together, and so on, are employed in Eucharistic catechesis. During sermons and sharing of the word of God in both parish and community Eucharistic celebrations, proverbs can serve as a useful mode of communication. The task required to accomplish this is to restructure the Shona catechism in such a way that proverbs will be integrated into it in order to make its questions more meaningful and easy to understand. This requires dedicated theologians, liturgists, linguists and local-congregants who are well versed in
Shona proverbs. The cooperation of these experts and Christians would yield a fruitful result in the form of a well-blended ‘Shona catechism’. This sub-section, therefore, strongly recommends the use of proverbs in the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese.

5.5.2 The Extended Family System/Familial Solidarity
The extended family system is also the bearer of important cultural values in African society. Generally, this system characterizes the African continent, especially sub-Saharan Africa. Schineller (1990:76) explains the thinking behind the extended family system with this African popular saying: “The isolated self is an abstraction, it is unreal.” This statement is true because in the extended family system there are many people, ranging from grand parents, parents, and children to uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces, and so on. Thus it is not very common to see a member of a Shona family experiencing isolation. In the extended family system, a ‘nuclear family’ is not talked about because it does not make much sense.

In addition to introducing the extended family system, this sub-section makes suggestions about how this kind of system can help not only in building up the Catholic Church in Mutare but also in facilitating the inculturation of the Eucharist in the diocese. References are made to other African countries, but the discussion focuses on the extended family system based on Shona culture. The extended family system is a reality in Shona culture because it is fundamental and functional among the people. For example, when a child is born in a family, he/she becomes a gift and concern of every body in the community, especially the neighbours. When the mother of the baby is in the field or at the market, she knows that the child is properly looked after by the mother in law, that is, the grandmother of the child as well as other extended family members. The idea is that ‘a child is not owned by one person alone’. When the child grows, he/she automatically imbibes the sense and the importance of the extended family system. This is precisely because the whole system is real and practical to him/her through experience. It is a system which is so rich and beneficial that it is reciprocal. For example, the grandparents
take care of the infant-child and when he/she grows up, she/he helps to maintain them and to fulfill some errands for them. In short, the extended family system provides adequate care for all in the family. It creates a sense of belonging and homeliness.

The extended family system receives the child with praises, appreciation and blessings especially from the elders in the family. No grown up child would want to miss this kind of attention from parents, grand parents and the other elders of the extended family or from the neighbours. In these lines, Schineller (1990:76) describes the responsibilities of the extended family system:

Loyalty to and support for one’s family are primary. One is one’s brother’s and sister’s keeper. The key image of sin is separation, isolation from the family and breaking family solidarity. One always remembers and returns to one’s roots in so far as possible, even if one has moved to a different location.

In the Shona extended family system, moments of joy, misfortune and sorrow are shared together. The system offers security in the sense that someone in the family is always there to help. It must be clear, however, that it does not encourage either laziness or over dependence, though it emphasizes family solidarity.

When the Church is referred to as a family of God, the extended family system becomes an ideal. This is because every member is part of the group. No one is an outsider or an alien. The notion of the extended family as it applies to the Catholic Church in Mutare diocese reduces or eliminates the uncaring attitude of members that prevailed in the Church during the ‘Western missionary era.’ The support each member receives helps to make him or her grow and have a sense of belonging. The Catholic Church in Mutare diocese would benefit, therefore, from being modeled on the extended family system, where, as in the Acts of the Apostles (4:34), “there was not a needy person among them.”
The extended family system can also be an important tool in promoting inculturation in the Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese. Its first important role is to eliminate among members the insensitivity that characterizes large Catholic communities. Because of the largeness of the community and its insensitivity, many members are not known and their talents are not recognized and fully utilized. Many Catholic members are reduced to ‘anonymity,’ a state similar to ‘nonentity,’ which forces them to look for love and care from other smaller denominations outside the Catholic Church. It is interesting to note that this ‘anonymity’ is not a state of life which people assume out of humility. Instead, it arises because people are not known, recognized and cared for. They see themselves as aliens in a place where they are supposed to be known as ‘first born’ children.

As an extended family, Catholics in Mutare diocese would gather to celebrate the Eucharist as one united family. This would enable all the members to be known and appreciated. As a family, also, no one is left out during meals. The extended family system would thus challenge the present Catholic practice where many attend Mass but are not allowed to receive Holy Communion. Should a family member for some reason decide not to eat on his or her own volition, the other members persuade him or her to join the family meal for the sake of family bonding. The sense of being a part of the family is normally so strong that none wants to be left out. The Catholic Church in Mutare diocese needs this sense of family-hood to be inculcated into the mind and heart of every Catholic member. This is an important task of inculturation, using the extended family system as a model. The Catholic Church in Mutare has much to benefit from the extended family system if it can adopt it as a model.

5.5.3 The Sense of Community Life

Being part of an extended family system easily prepares a family member to identify with the wider community. This is because the sense of communalism is already acquired in the extended family system. Onwubiko (1991:14) is right in this regard when he affirms: “Therefore, the authentic African is known and identified in, by and through his [her] community.” A Shona proverb says ‘community is strength,’ i.e., *kubatana isimba*. Since
the community is the custodian of the individual, the individual must go where the community is found. Community life guarantees togetherness and solidarity. For example, when a member of the community has a misfortune, he or she is helped through communal cooperation. No amount of work is hard to accomplish because many hands join to do it. When someone’s house is destroyed by fire, it is immediately repaired or rebuilt without any regard to the time of the day. The joyful part of this type of work is that it is done happily and voluntarily. Onwubiko (1991:16) has an appealing description of this fact in these words:

When a job had to be done, the whole community turned out with supplies and music and proceeded to sing and dance its way through to the successful conclusion of each particular chore. In this way, work was converted into a pleasurable productive pastime.

Problems that require finance are solved with communal resources. In Nigeria, for example, when such a problem arose, a whole village would agree that the proceeds of the palm nuts would be used for its solution. Many destitute but intelligent pupils were sponsored in their overseas studies through this communal solidarity. In Mutare, orphaned children of poor relatives have been looked after and sponsored through communal efforts. The community life is backed up by Nyerere’s philosophy of ‘Ujamaa’. It is rooted in ‘togetherness’, which is also the base for community life. The essence of this philosophy, according to Nyerere, is that “African traditions should serve as the basis for all future African development” (see Onwubiko 1991:17).

The Shona community life could be helpful in promoting Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare in the following ways. It would help to encourage and bring about a self-reliant Church. Community life fosters a unique charism that is able to reduce the dependence syndrome that characterizes the Catholic Church of our time. The dependence syndrome, where people look up to Europe or America for help in any project, came with the Western missionaries who often won converts with gifts. Unfortunately, our people have relied so much on donors that many have lost the sense of self-reliance in the Church. What is needed in this age of inculturation is to appeal to the sentiments of Catholics in
Mutare diocese toward their heritage of ‘Shona communal life’. That is to say, there is need to appeal to Catholics in Mutare to reclaim their Shona communal life and its good practices. The result will be that when there is something to be done in their Church, they will be encouraged to do it in groups and as a community.

This is where the establishment of ‘Small Christian Communities’ (SCC) would be of great importance. The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA) recognizes the importance of SCC in the building of the Church. In his book, ‘Communio at the Grassroots: Small Christian Communities,’ Mringi (1995:1) documents the essential teaching of (AMECEA) on SCC in these lines:

That Church life must be based on the Communities in which everyday life and work takes place: Those basic and manageable social groupings whose members can experience real inter-personal relationships and feel a sense of communal belonging both in living and working… Christian Communities at this level will best be suited to develop real intense vitality and to become effective witnesses to their natural environment—present Church structures and attitudes [should] be modified, e.g. establishing basic Christian Communities, by giving more responsibility to the laity as local leaders, and by a better utilization and distribution of manpower.

This long passage explains both the origin and function of SCC. As a way of empowering SCC members, Mringi (1995:291) suggests that, among other things: “the members could cultivate a common field and other small-scale projects to become self-supporting as a small Christian community.” This type of empowerment would enable SCC members to work together as a community for the up-liftment of local Churches. Furthermore, Eucharistic celebration in smaller groups would help to enhance community life. Instead of lumping a huge congregation together. Therefore, Catholic members could be organized in small communities for effective administration and mutual support.

5.5.4 The Sense of Hospitality
Hospitality is another Shona cultural value that requires attention in this chapter. The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (1989:603) gives a precise definition of hospitality as: “a friendly and generous reception and entertainment of guests or strangers, especially in one’s own home.” Traditionally, the Shona people, like other
Africans, have a good spirit that is welcoming to their visitors. Onwubiko (1991:23) recognizes how this important cultural value has survived till the present generation and affirms: “The African sense of hospitality is one of the African values that is still quite alive.” One quality that characterizes hospitality among the Shona people, especially towards visitors, is its spontaneity and voluntary nature. The motivation behind the great respect for visitors is rooted in the belief that says: “Let the guest come so that the host or hostess may benefit (get well)” (see Healey and Sybertz 1996:168).

A visitor is gladly received with *titambire*—a Shona word expressing ‘welcome.’ When the visitor enters the house and sits down, the host expresses a very hearty greeting by the light clapping of hands, which is followed by a conversation and some form of entertainment. Such a welcome given to the visitor carries with it psychological and emotional disposition. The language this type of welcome speaks is ‘feel at home with us.’ Traditionally, a visitor in Shona culture is served with water. The rationale is that the visitor has traveled a long distance. This means that the visitor must be tired and thirsty. Water serves to quench the thirst and to refresh the visitor. Symbolically, water here becomes life giving and life sustaining. Among the Igbos of Nigeria, kola nut is served first as a sign of welcome and hospitality to a visitor. The hospitality shown to a visitor has its own blessings since a visitor well received has a blessing to offer. A visitor brings about healing to the host. For example, in a family where there is a quarrel, as soon as a visitor arrives, the quarrel is buried so that all the family members can join hands together to welcome and entertain the visitor. When this team spirit of service prevails, the presence of the visitor has not only brought back peace, it has also brought reconciliation and healing. When a member of a family is sick and a visitor arrives, the patient cheers up, gets out of bed and joins the rest of the family members to welcome their visitor. Healey and Sybertz (1996:174) are right to conclude that: “Visitors are social healers—they are family doctors in a sense.”

Shona people believe that it is not what the visitor eats that will finish the food. It is in line with this thought or belief that Schineller (1990:79) remarks: “If there is food enough
for three, there is enough for five of for six.” Furthermore, in Shona culture, it is believed that by treating a visitor well, the host will be treated well at another place where he or she will be the guest. It is this conviction that necessitates the Shona proverb that says: “Usatuke verwendo rutsoka ndimarase.” In a literal translation it means: ‘Do not scold people on a journey, foot has no nose.’ It is interesting to note that this Shona hospitality finds resonance in the biblical passage that reads: “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by doing that, some have entertained Angels without knowing it” (Hebrew 13:2).

Hospitality, as discussed, has two major inculturation implications for the Church. In the first place, as Jesus was a guest to the shepherds of Bethlehem and brought them Good News, so was he to Zacchaeus at his home and to the two going to Emmaus. These he also brought Good News. In the same vein, the Shona hospitality would enable the Shona people to welcome Christ well so that he settles among them, becomes part of them and gets deeply rooted in their culture. In other words, Christianity would begin to take gradual root in Shona culture. What is required here is proper catechesis that enables the local people to appreciate the Good News of Christ which they have received so that as he transforms them, he may also transform their culture. Secondly, by receiving visitors well in the Catholic Church, irrespective of their tribe, colour, religion—especially denomination--hospitality will become a means of breaking division among people especially between Catholics and non-Catholics. This is one important role inculturation is expected to play.

5.6 Conclusion
Two major tasks were involved in the theme of this chapter. The first task was a prolonged journey to discover the meaning and significance of the Eucharist in the New Testament (NT). The second was to determine the implications of the Eucharist and tradition for effective inculturation in Mutare diocese. The knowledge of the Eucharist does not remain the sole prerogative of biblical scholars and theologians, but it also has to extend to every member of the Catholic Church.
This is where catechesis comes into play, in order to enable other members of the Church to learn more about the Eucharist. It was deemed necessary to review present catechetical instruction in Mutare diocese. In this way it was discovered that the present Shona catechism was a translation from another translation of the original text. Some suggestions were made on how to achieve effective inculturation of catechesis of the Eucharist in Mutare. In other words, the Eucharist as an important Sacrament has to be taught through a process of catechetical inculturation. In the simplest term, this is what I call an ‘inculturated Eucharistic Catechesis.’

The importance of the Eucharist and the place it occupies in the life of the Church prompted the Fathers of Vatican II Council, under Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC) 1966, to refer to it as “the true center of the whole Christian Life” (SC. No. 9 art. 6). The Eucharist is also called the ‘Source and Summit of Christian Life.’ The study in general and chapter five in particular, has as one of its aims to help Catholics in Mutare to understand and appreciate the role the Eucharist plays in their lives. Such understanding and appreciation of the importance of the Eucharist is to be expressed by a lively and participatory Eucharistic celebration brought about through inculturation. This explains why much time and effort were devoted to the section that dealt with catechesis of the Eucharist, which had as its aim the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese.

In order to have a balanced appreciation of the importance of Eucharistic catechesis, a critique of current catechetical instruction in Mutare diocese was made. It was discovered that such instruction lacked basic inculturation and this contributed to a large extent to the poor understanding of the meaning and importance of the Eucharist among Catholics in the diocese. In order to improve present catechetical instruction, some suggestions were made involving the use of trained catechists and modern technology. Lessons must be derived from the culture of the place and presented in the form of images. The place of tradition in inculturation was also discussed. The NT, especially the Gospels and Paul’s letters to the Corinthians, were referred to from time to time for more clarification, support and inspiration in the discussions.
Finally, the important roles played by cultural values in inculturation were considered. To examine these roles, I tried to draw some inspiration from Shona cultural values, where a review of the use of proverbs, the importance of the extended family system, community life, and the effectiveness of Shona hospitality was made. On the one hand, I tried to determine how these cultural values could promote inculturation. On the other, some suggestions on how to apply these cultural values in Eucharistic inculturation were made. In conclusion, it must be pointed out that concepts like catechesis, unity, and even cultural values, were emphasized or repeated during the discussion in order to show their importance. The Catholic Church has remained committed to the understanding and teaching of the Eucharist as an important sacrament in her life. Chapter six examines how the Church has persevered in this teaching to her members down through the ages and whether any traces of inculturation can be detected in this mission.
CHAPTER 6

CHURCH’S TEACHING ON THE EUCHARIST DOWN THE AGES: ANY RELEVANCE TO INCULTURATION?

6.1 Introduction
The discussion in chapter five, which was concerned with the meaning and significance of the ‘Eucharist in the New Testament,’ on the one hand, and determining the implications of the Eucharist and tradition in the diocese, on the other, has a challenge for the Church to develop effective methods of teaching especially the Eucharist. The teaching of the Church on the Eucharist began soon after Jesus and his apostles and continued until today. The task to make it well understood by all Catholics has remained with the Church, referred to as the ‘Body of Christ.’ It is the aim of chapter six, therefore, to examine this important function of the Church—the teaching on the Eucharist from generation to generation.

The Church has gone through many stages in her existence. These stages have helped her to define and re-define as well as to update some of her teachings. Central among these has been the teaching regarding the Eucharist. Schnackenburg (1965:194) is right when he remarks: “The Church is to preserve itself like a chaste Virgin in order to celebrate a marriage with Christ at the Parousia.” While, I am not writing a systematic theology of the Church in this chapter, it is necessary for me to give some clarification on how I use the word ‘Church’ here. The following definitions of the Church are given below for purposes of illustration. In tracing the root of what is known as the Church in the Bible, Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:215) has this to say:

In the New Testament the term ekklesia always refers to a group of people: (1) those Christians in a region or city (e.g. Acts 14:23ff; 1 Cor. 1:1); (2) those gathered in a particular house (Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19); (3) all Christians gathered in the church (Mtt. 16:18; Eph. 1:2).

In order to lend support to the definition above, McBrien (1994:735) gives this comprehensive and embracing explanation:
The Church is the whole body, or congregation, of persons who are called by God the Father to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, the Son, in word, in Sacrament, in witness and in service, and, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to collaborate with Jesus’ historic mission for the sake of the kingdom of God.

This explanation is embracing because it includes Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans, Protestants and Oriental Christians. It also applies to both the Universal and Local Church. Furthermore, the explanation highlights the essential characteristics of a Church entrusted with the duty of proclaiming the kingdom of God.

This chapter is mainly about the Catholic Church. However, in our discussions regarding the Eucharist in the early Church our focus will be on the teachings of both the Eastern and Western Church traditions. An effort will be made to determine whether some of these teachings made any references to inculturation. I say ‘any references to inculturation’ because the writers of the early Church were not so much preoccupied with inculturation as we are in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—perhaps more so in Africa. I will also examine the Eucharistic prayer of the early Church to determine how the Eucharist is reflected in the life of the nascent Church. The analysis of the Eucharistic prayer is necessary because of the important place it occupies in the Eucharistic celebration. In the process, Documents like the Didache will be examined. Personalities like Hypolytus, Justin, Ambrose and Augustine will also be examined briefly in order to extract some salient points from their teachings on the Eucharist and to consider whether some traces of inculturation are applicable to these teachings. In effect, the whole process in this chapter revolves around the Church’s teaching—catechesis and its implication for inculturation.

Later in my discussions on the Eucharist, I narrow my use of the word “Church” to the Roman Catholic Church. This is because the understanding and practice of the Eucharist in the West, with its headquarters in Rome, is different from those of the Eastern Orthodox and other Western Churches. Two important Church councils, those of Trent and the Second Vatican (Vatican II), will be studied in order to highlight their important
teachings on the Eucharist. A critical study of Vatican II will enable us to highlight the role this ecumenical council played to bring about the new understanding of culture and the possible promotion of inculturation. Today, the era of anathema with its unrestricted excommunications has passed. The present Church favors and promotes ecumenism. It is important to state here that my approach in this chapter is mainly historical and analytical. However, it will not be possible to study all the twenty-one recognized ecumenical councils of the Church, from Nicaea I in AD 325 to Vatican II in 1962, within the scope of this thesis. The importance of this chapter is in laying the foundation for a proper understanding of the Eucharist as celebrated and taught by the early Christians. I now take gradual steps to examine how the Eucharist has been understood and practiced after the immediate apostles of Jesus, beginning with the early Church until our present time.

6.2 The Early Church: Eucharistic Celebration with Eucharistic Prayer

For a systematic study of the Eucharist it is necessary to begin with the early Church because this period is closer to the period known as the apostolic age. My aim in this section is to examine how the Eucharist was understood, taught and practiced in the early Church. I will examine those aspects of it, especially the Eucharistic prayer, which will help us better to understand the Eucharistic life of the early Church. The study of the Eucharistic prayers will also enable us to see whether they contained any traces of inculturation within them.

Historically, what we know today as the early Church is classified into two eras. Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:216) describes these two important stages of the Church thus: “The first is called the ‘Apostolic Age,’ from 30 to 180, and is of course dominated by the towering figures of the twelve Apostles, the disciples of Jesus and their immediate followers. Sometimes [it is] called the primitive Church…” The main concern in this chapter is with the second division of this early era of the Church. Once more, Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:216) gives us detailed information on this period in this description:
The second sub-division in the era known as the “early Church” is usually referred to as the “sub apostolic Church”, 180-313, which is characterized by numerical growth, geographical expansion, severe persecution, theological activity (especially in the cities of Antioch and Alexandria) and a growing attention to the problems presented by the world, especially the Roman Empire.

At this early period of the Church, East and West Christendom had not yet separated, though they had their unique differences in the Eucharistic celebrations. As in the first period, where the principal figures were called ‘apostles’ and disciples, the chief personages of the second period of the early Church were referred to as the ‘Fathers of the Church.’ Under separate sub-sections I intend to give special attention to the works of some of the Fathers of the Church on the Eucharist. Pier (1987:11) gives a good collective portrayal of the Fathers in this illustration:

The Fathers of the Church are those personages, almost always bishops and thus endowed with particular pastoral responsibilities, who decisively influenced by their preaching and writings both the development of Christian doctrine and the formation of Christian customs. The Fathers unite in themselves the enduring characteristics of a holy life, wisdom and antiquity.

These Fathers of the Church, as shown in this quotation, laid a strong foundation for the Church through their life style, their teachings and writings. Not much was said, however, or profoundly taught about the Eucharist before the fourth century. Lampe (1968:34) confirms this fact in these words: “It is not until the fourth century that we find detailed information about the teaching given to catechumens about the Eucharist…” The reasons for this scanty information on the Eucharist vary from historical to cultural reasons. Much of the period under discussion witnessed significant borrowings from the surrounding pagan culture. Referring to this borrowing in relation to sacraments in general, among which the Eucharist is one, Martos (1991:23) asserts:

Greek-speaking Christians some time later began to speak of their sacramental rituals as ‘mysteries’, apparently borrowing the term from the pagan mysteries, but in Paul’s letters mysterion always had the more everyday meaning of something which is hidden or secret.
This idea of keeping the sacraments in general and the Eucharist in particular secret from the new converts influenced the Fathers of this period. Lampe (1968:34) explains this fact clearly in this statement: “The strong third century tendency to present the Christian sacraments as true counterparts of the false pagan mysteries, and consequently to conceal the details of them from the uninitiated, is a contributory factor.” In effect, only a skeletal aspect of the Eucharist was taught to those who were not yet fully initiated into the Catholic community. Since they were not yet baptized, they were not allowed to know much about the Eucharist or to receive it. In this circumstance, therefore, the teaching of the Eucharist was not systematic. Sheerin (1986:16) confirms this idea when he asserts: “The Fathers themselves rarely approached the Eucharist in a wholly comprehensive, synthetic way.” Sipuka (2000:25) not only agrees with Sheerin, but he also goes further to point out another reason why the teaching of the Eucharist in the early Church was scanty when he records:

What is immediately noticeable about the teaching of the Fathers on the Eucharistic sacrifice…is that it is not coherent and systematic. One of the major reasons for this is that often their thoughts were expressed in the context of responding to the situations. It was in the context of preaching, teaching, advising, responding to accusations and heresies, etc., that they made statements, without bothering too much about coherence of thought and clarity of terms.

Besides the fact that the nascent Church was yet to build up an adequate vocabulary with which to express itself in areas like the Eucharist, it was also disturbed by the incessant persecutions of the time. Furthermore, the early Fathers thought that since the Eucharist was both a mystery and sacred food, the un-initiate would learn more about it after their baptism through their participation in the celebration. Sheerin (1986:18) further confirms this in these lines: “The Eucharist was for the Fathers a mystery, rather like a splendid, many-faceted gem which they held up, before themselves and their people, to the light of the Spirit.” In other words, the new converts would be enlightened by the Spirit when they started to participate and share at the breaking of bread—the Eucharist. This limitation in terms of the teaching on the Eucharist notwithstanding, the Fathers of the early Church were convinced that in the background of their understanding of the Eucharist, there stood the Jewish meal of fellowship and prayers before the meal, and, in particular, the Passover commemoration of the redemption.
Though the teaching of the Eucharist for the new converts was unsystematic, however, in practice the Eucharistic meal was the main focus of their fellowship. It was, for them, both the ground and expression of the Church’s unity in Christ and of the love that binds the newly founded Church together even in the midst of persecutions. The encouragement these early Christians derived from the Eucharist motivated them even to the point of dying in the name of Christ because it was based on the understanding that they were not only carrying out Jesus’ command, but were also following His footsteps. Lampe (1968:36) presents this conviction succinctly as follows:

In the Eucharist Christ’s death and resurrection were made present to the faithful as contemporary realities in which they participated sacramentally and in which they shared, in a more tangible way, in the daily dying and rising with Christ which, according to much early Christian thought found its proper fulfillment in martyrdom.

6.2.1 Eucharistic Prayer
This survey of the Eucharistic celebration of the early Church will not be fully grasped without a proper understanding of the Eucharistic prayer of the time. This is because the Eucharistic prayer is part and parcel of the Eucharistic celebration. Thus, the Eucharistic prayer will be used as an example to highlight the main features of the Eucharistic celebration of the early Church. This is because, according to the Roman Missal General Instruction, No 54, the Eucharistic prayer is referred to as “the center and high point of the entire celebration.” Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia explains both the meaning and origin of the Eucharistic Prayer in this context:

The term “Eucharistic Prayer” derives from the Greek term anaphora (literally “elevation, lifting up”) and the Latin terms oratio oblationis (Prayer of offering), illatio (contribution or sacrifice), canon (rule or norm), prex (prayer) and canon actionis (rule of action). Earliest evidence of the outline of the Eucharistic Prayer (not the text itself) comes from the apostolic tradition of Hippolytus-d. A.D. 215 (1991:370).

In other words, the Eucharistic Prayer is a prayer of thanksgiving, which is always said over the bread and the cup during the Eucharistic celebration. It is known by various names. For example, in the East, it is called anaphora and in the West, it is referred to as
the canon of the Mass. In his commentary on the function and origin of the Eucharistic Prayer, Crockett (1989:52) remarks:

The function of the Eucharistic Prayer is to render praise and thanksgiving to God over the bread and the cup for creation and redemption. In thanking God, the Church followed the Jewish custom of summing up its faith in what God has done. The prayer is therefore, primarily a recital of the mighty works of God.

The Eucharistic Prayer of the early Church, like the Jewish thanksgiving over the cup (birkatha -mazon), took note of such things as the land and food. Crockett (1989:40) highlights these facts in this text: “And for all these things we give you thanks and bless your name forever and beyond. Blessed are you, Lord, for the land and for food.” Recognizing that food is obtained through planting and harvest, the Eucharistic Prayer of the early Church did not forget to pray for these important seasons of the year as well as other occasions important to human beings. Continuing with the text, Crockett (1989:48) records:

[For seed time and] harvest… preserve for the poor of [your] people, for all of us who call upon [your] name, for all who hope in you. Give rest to the souls of those who have fallen asleep, remember those of whom we make mention today, both those whose names we say [and] whose we do not say…

The Eucharistic Prayer of the early Church has striking features. From all indications, it includes thanksgiving for creation, foresight for future blessing of the work of human hands and willingness to offer prayers for the needy in society and the recognition of the departed ones. Taking recognition of the departed ones, for example, it becomes obvious that the Eucharistic prayer of this period contained some aspects of Jewish cultural values. Referring to the early Christians, most of whom had Jewish background, Power (1995:77) remarks: “Remembrance of the dead within the Eucharist, even within the Eucharistic prayer, which later was certainly common, may well have begun in this era.” These cultural values point to inculturation because these essential aspects of the culture of the Jewish people were well integrated into the structure of the prayer. Power (1995:83) calls this integration adaptation and he explains it thus: “The other two prayers,
however, also deserve attention for they too are Christian adaptations of Jewish blessing forms.” Furthermore, the relationship between Christianity and the Jewish culture is highlighted by Crockett (1989:53) in these words: “Once the Jewish prayer is Christianized, the motive of the thanksgiving became explicitly Christological…” Though the teachings of the Fathers of the Church on the Eucharist did not refer to inculturation directly, there is evidence that the Eucharistic Prayer of the early Church had some cultural significance because they lived in their own cultural milieu characterized by Jewish culture.

In an attempt to inculturate the Eucharist in Mutare diocese, there is also need for the diocese to have its own Eucharistic prayers for various occasions. In this effort, the Eucharistic Prayer of the early church has a lesson for Mutare Catholics. The first lesson we can learn from this is the role the cultural pattern plays in the Eucharistic celebration of a people. Chupungco (1992:35) defines a cultural pattern as follows: “Cultural pattern is the typical mode of thinking, speaking and expressing oneself through rites, symbols, and art forms. It affects society’s values and ideology, social and family traditions, socio-economic life and political system.” This definition of cultural pattern, in the present context, is better expressed in prayer.

Crockett (1989:40) presents this format of a section in the early Church’s Eucharistic prayer: “Blessed are you, Lord, you nourish the universe. We will give thanks to you, Lord our God, because you have given us for our inheritance a desirable land, good and wide, the covenant and the law, life and food…” In other words, our Eucharistic Prayers should cater for seasons like planting and harvesting, certain moments like birth and naming ceremony as well as death. Certain times of the year could be devoted to prayer for the healing of the sick and for fecundity. Prayers directed at such seasons and moments will surely, assure Catholics in Mutare that the Church in our diocese is concerned about their welfare. When this happens, the Eucharistic celebration will become meaningful and purposeful. The Eucharistic inculturation, therefore, must take this cultural pattern into consideration.
6.2.1.1 Eucharistic Prayer in the Didache

This analysis of the Eucharistic prayer of the early Church is followed by that of an ancient document called ‘the Didache.’ This document is selected as one of the documents to be studied in an attempt to better understand the significance of the Eucharist and how it was celebrated in the early Christian community. The ‘Didache’ is examined, therefore, in order to find out the role it played to bring into focus the place of the Eucharist in the early Church. In this analysis I will also try to identify areas where inculturation is implied. Since this document is being introduced for the first time in this thesis, it is necessary for me to give it a brief historical context that will facilitate a proper analysis of it. Chapters 9, 10 and 14 of the document will be studied to highlight the place of the Eucharist in it, from where I will determine whether inculturation had a place or not.

Many authors have written variously about the Didache. For some, it is hailed highly and for others, it is the center of controversy. Three of the authors who speak highly of it and one who sees it differently will be referred to here. For LaVerdiere (1996:128), “the Didache is a remarkable document, a kind of community rule or manual of discipline; it is a treasure trove of early Christian traditions, sayings, instructions and prayers…” The Didache is a remarkable document for LaVerdiere because it presents not only the essence of community rule, but it also preserves the traditions that are passed on from generation to generation for purposeful living together. Kleist (1948:8), one of the translators of the Didache, remarks in his introduction that: “The Didache, or the teaching of the Twelve Apostles, has been hailed as the most important patristic [document]…”

Since Kleist links the Didache directly to the twelve apostles, he considers it an important document for effective catechesis. Also confirming the Didache as a useful document, Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:307) remarks that it is: “a short but important early Christian work by an unknown author…” All three references not only see the Didache as an important document, but they also acknowledge that it is ancient.
Seeing it from a different standpoint, Sheerin (1986:283) asserts: “The Didache has been a center of on-going controversy since its first publication in 1883.” Sheerin is not specific about why he refers to the Didache as a center of controversy. The controversy might stem first from the fact that historians do not agree on the date and place of its composition.

Concerning the date of its composition, while Sheerin (1986:283) speculates that it dates “from 70 to 200 or later”, LaVerdiere (1996:131) suggests the period “around the year AD 50 to 100”. Two possible places of its origin are suggested, namely Egypt and Syria. More opinions suggest that its likely place of origin is Syria. All the authors agree that the author of the document is unknown. They also agree that the document was discovered by the Orthodox Metropolitan Bryennios at Constantinople between 1873-1875, and that the Didache contains 16 chapters. Sheerin (1986:283) summarizes its 16 chapters as follows: “The Didache is a composite document, consisting of a moral tractate (chaps. 1-6), a Church Order (directory of liturgical observance and ecclesiastical discipline—chapters 7-15), and a concluding prophecy” (chapter 16).

Kleist (1948:6-7) introduces the part on the Eucharist in the Didache with a scholarly commentary as follows:

The chief interest—and great puzzle—of the Didache is in its Eucharistic chapters 9 and 10. The author does not describe the celebration of the Eucharist, which he has in mind (cf. Rom. 16:5); but in furnishing prayers to be used at such a celebration, he gives several indications, which allow us to see how he wanted the prayers to be fitted in.

Here, Kleist admits that the author of the Didache was not describing the celebration of the Eucharist. Instead, he was interested in the prayers that must be said during the actual celebration. In other words, by identifying the importance of giving thanks, which we call the Eucharist, the Didache’s presentation becomes informative. Koenig (2000:21) highlights this fact in this statement: “Moreover, the Didache, in which the word ‘Eucharist’ is used for the first time on record to identify the Church’s chief ritual supper, offers these directions for celebrating it.” It will be remembered that in chapter 5 I
observed that the word Eucharist never appeared in the New Testament. It becomes very inspiring, therefore, that such an ancient document contains the word, thus affirming the Church’s use of it. The text considered to be Eucharistic in the Didache reads as follows:

9: Regarding the Eucharist. Give thanks as follows: First concerning the cup: We give thanks, Our Father, for the Holy Vine of David thy servant which thou hast made known to us through Jesus thy servant. To thee be the glory forevermore. Next, concerning the broken bread: We give thee thanks, Our Father for the life and knowledge which thou hast made known to us through Jesus, thy servant. To thee be the glory forevermore. As this broken bread was scattered over the hills and then, when gathered, became one mass, so may thy church be gathered from the ends of the earth into thy kingdom. For thine is the glory and power through Jesus Christ forevermore. Let no one eat and drink of your Eucharist but those baptized in the name of the Lord; to this, too, the saying of the Lord is applicable. Do not give to dogs what is sacred.

10: After you have taken your fill of food, give thanks as follows: We give you thanks O Holy Father, for thy holy name which thou has enshrined in our hearts, and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which thou hast made known to us through Jesus Christ, thy servant. To thee be the glory forevermore. Thou, Lord Almighty, has created all things for the sake of thy name and has given food and drink for [people] to enjoy, that they may give thanks to thee; but to us, thou hast vouchsafed [granted] spiritual food and drink and eternal life through Jesus thy servant. Above all, we give thee glory forevermore. Remember, O Lord, thy Church: deliver her from all evil, perfect her in thy love, and from the four winds assemble her, the sanctified, in thy kingdom which thou hast prepared for her. For thine is the power and the glory forevermore. May Grace come, and this world pass away! Hosanna to the God of David. If any one is holy, let him [her] advance; if any one is not, let him [her] be convicted. Maranatha! Amen. But permit the prophets to give thanks as much as they desire.

The prayers in chapters 9 and 10 of the document were closely structured on Jewish prayers meant for religious meals. Bouyer (1968:116) acknowledges the place of these prayers in the Didache as well as their origin from the Jewish religion in these words: “What now interests us in the Didache for our study is only the prayers themselves. That these are of Jewish origin, as Dibelius was the first modern scholar to acknowledge, is obvious once we connect them with the traditional Jewish meal prayers.” It can be said, therefore, that the community from where these prayers were formulated, was influenced by its association with Judaism. Secondly, the prayers in the Didache emphasize the importance of thanksgiving, which we also refer to as ‘Eucharist.’ In both chapters 9 and 10, thanksgiving is prominent. Thanksgiving is not only an appropriate word in the Eucharistic celebration, it is also a favorite word because it enables participating
Christians to appreciate what Christ has done for them by giving himself as spiritual food.

Our third observation is that the Didache mentions the cup first before the bread. Perhaps the author of the Didache was following Luke 22:17, where the cup was mentioned before the bread. While Luke mentions another cup in 22:20, the Didache talks of the first and only cup. Emphasizing the place of prayers in the Didache and associating them with ‘eucharistia,’ Power (1995:83) remarks: “We will recall that in Didache 9 there are three literary units: (1) a prayer (eucharistia) over the cup, (2) a prayer (eucharistia) over the bread, and (3) a prayer (of petition) for the Church.” In these three units of prayer, the Eucharist is implied. On a different note, KilPatrick argues that the prayers in the Didache may not be rightly considered as Eucharistic. Among the arguments KilPatrick (1975:19) advances, the third one brings out his argument succinctly:

Thirdly, the references to Jesus are peripheral and can be removed from the text without damaging its structure and content. Like the Eucharistic prayer, the thanksgivings in the Didache are directed to God the Father, but, as we have seen, the core of the Eucharistic Prayer is the saving acts of Jesus and the Institution Narrative is recited. This is not true of the prayers in the Didache.

Certainly the institution narrative is completely absent in the prayers in the Didache. Thus, if we limit ourselves to chapters 9 and 10 of the Didache or if we look for the institution narrative only in chapters 9 and 10, we may conclude that the prayers therein are not Eucharistic. For LaVerdiere, this may not be so because he thinks he has a convincing answer for those who have doubts. He writes: “If there was any doubt that the Didache was actually referring to the Eucharist as celebrated by the Church today, chapter 14:1-15:2, with its reference to the Lord’s Day and to the sacrifice, seems to dispel it.” Didache 14:1 states: “On the Lord’s own day, assemble in common to break bread and offer thanks, but first confess your sins, so that your sacrifice may be pure.” With the breaking of bread and giving thanks mentioned in chapter 14, it seems correct to affirm that the Didache is Eucharistic in its form and celebration. Even in our present
time, what we call the ‘penitential rite’ is, I suppose, what the Didache advocates when it says “…but first confess your sins…”

We can conclude the discussion concerning whether the prayers in the Didache are Eucharistic or not in two ways. In the first place, we can assume that, for the Didache’s community, it was celebrating the Eucharist because the prayers were meant to help its members to prepare for both the community meal and for the communion-Eucharist meant for baptized Christians only. On the other hand, from a Christological point of view the Didache’s community was not celebrating the real Eucharist because the real Eucharistic celebration must have reference to the passion, death and resurrection of Christ. We must not forget also that the Eucharistic celebration as we have it today evolved through long and many processes. Thus, it would not be completely right to expect the Eucharistic form mentioned in the Didache to be as up to date as that of the twenty first century type. In this discussion, it is obvious that the Didache, as an ancient document, was preoccupied to highlight those prayers which we regard as Eucharistic. In conclusion, we can say that the Didache is a good pointer to the Eucharist, considering the fact that it highlights some principal aspects of the Eucharist like the breaking of bread and giving thanks.

It is not easy to point at concrete instances which reflect signs of inculturation in the document. However, by implication, the interaction between the early Christians and the Judaizers whose culture is reflected in their prayers means that inculturation is indirectly involved. That is, some prayers in the Didache, as Bouyer informs us, have direct link with the traditional Jewish meal prayers. The Jewish meal prayers are imbedded in Jewish culture. Therefore, we can say that inculturation is indirectly implied in the Didache. From a closer look at the Jewish table meal and the Christian Eucharistic celebration, for example, it is certain that the early Christians adapted much of their Eucharistic celebration to the Jewish cultural pattern. One primary lesson the Catholics in Mutare could learn from the Didache is its originality and its insistence on thanksgiving and the unity of the Church. The Catholic diocese of Mutare must work for unity as
discussed in chapter three and also appreciate its cultural values through thanksgiving to the creator, which is to be expressed it its Eucharistic prayers.

**6.2.2 Justin Martyr**

In our effort to understand the Eucharist of the early Church, it is also necessary to examine the writings of some Fathers of the early Church. Their writings are very important for the understanding of the Eucharist, both for the early Christians and for the present twenty-first century Christians. One of these early Christian writers is Justin the martyr. Justin became famous by defending Christianity through his authentic teaching and public explanation of the correct meaning of the Eucharist and the importance of its celebration. LaVerdiere (1996:168) gives us a brilliant starting point of Justin’s involvement in these words:

> As Christianity grew and became more prominent, rumors of its Eucharist, mostly sensational, scurrilous, spread through the population. Many discounted such rumors but did not understand what the Eucharist was and what Christians did when they celebrated it. The Eucharist needed an apologist, one who could present it, describe it and explain it. Justin, a layperson with philosophical credentials, took on the challenge.

It is important also to find out whether Justin’s writings contained some elements of inculturation. Justin came from a Gentile family and was born towards the end of the first or beginning of the second century. In fact, LaVerdiere (1996:169) tells us, “He was of mixed Greek and Roman ancestry.” He was a native of Nabulus in Samaria. Justin was an educated layperson who pursued religious and philosophical study for a long period of time. Concerning his study and conversion, Sheerin (1986:33) has this to say: “After a considerable study of pagan culture and philosophy, he was converted to Christianity shortly before the period 132-135.” As a teacher, he first taught in Ephesus and around Ad 150 he moved to Rome, where he founded a school of Christian Philosophy. While in Rome, he wrote his first Apology in defense of, and an explanation of, Christianity.

He addressed his first Apology to the Royal family, mainly to Emperor Marcus Aurelius, his son Verissimus and his adopted son, Lucius. In this first Apology, Justin developed
five themes, namely: an appeal for justice, a response to slanders, arguments for the fundamental truth and value of Christianity, a more theological presentation and an account of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist. Our main concern is with the last theme, namely with the ‘Eucharist’. As we delve into Justin’s writings on the Eucharist, we also look out for those teachings of his that lend support to the project of inculturation.

It is important to remark that Justin’s teaching was systematic. In the first place, he spoke of baptism, which he saw as the gateway to participation in the celebration and a permit to the reception of the sacred food. He went on to explain how the Eucharist is celebrated, the meaning of the Eucharist as food and then the condition for receiving the Holy Communion. LaVerdiere (1996:173) documents Justin’s teachings on baptism and the Eucharist thus:

After the baptism, the newly baptized joined the community in a celebration of the Eucharist… Members of the community had brought the candidates to a place where there was water… After washing each one, they led the baptized to the place where those called ‘brothers and sisters’ (adelphoi) were assembled.

Situating the celebration of the Eucharist in a community context, Justin demonstrated how the Eucharist is celebrated:

Taking (labon) the bread and the cup of water and wine, the president offers praise and glory to the Father of all, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and offers lengthy thanksgiving (eucharistian) because the father has found the community worthy of these gifts (see Laverdiere 1996:174).

Once again this prayer manifests a spirit of thanksgiving to the Father through the Son and the Holy Spirit. Some actions of Jesus, like taking bread, giving thanks, are repeated here by the president, as Justin calls him. For this reason, the prayer is accepted as Eucharistic. In order for the people to be fully involved, Justin tells us, those present at the celebration give their assent by saying ‘Amen.’ Justin also explains ‘Amen’ as a Hebrew word which means, “so be it (Genoito)” (see LaVerdiere 1996:174).
After the president’s prayer of thanksgiving and the people’s response, Amen, Justin continues to explain, “they whom we call deacons (diakonoi) give to each of those present to partake (metalabein) of the Eucharisticized bread (apo tou eucharistethentos artou) and the wine and water, and they bring them to those not present.” For the people to respond correctly and participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, Justin insists that they must be taught and in their language. When they say ‘Amen,’ for example, he emphasizes that they should know what it means in their language. Justin also explains the meaning of the Eucharistic food. Sheerin (1986:34) has a detailed record of this explanation in these words:

Not as a common bread or as a common drink do we receive these, but just as through the word of God, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, became incarnate and took on flesh and blood for our salvation, so, we have been taught, the food over which thanks has been given by the prayer of His word, and which nourishes our flesh and blood by assimilation, is both the flesh and the blood of that incarnate Jesus.

In order to emphasize that the action and word through which the bread and wine became the body and blood of Jesus were really the words of Jesus handed down by the apostles, Justin continues: “Jesus took bread, and, after giving thanks, said ‘Do this in remembrance of me; this is my body.’ In like manner He also took the cup, gave thanks, and said: ‘This is my blood.’”

It is in the process of explaining the Eucharistic food that Justin brought in the institution narrative to show that the Eucharistic food was and still is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ. Since not all would accept and believe this teaching, Justin gave the conditions under which people are permitted to receive the Eucharist. LaVerdiere (1996:176) records these conditions: “To understand, one had to join the Christian Community in celebrating the Eucharist. But for that one would have to believe what Christians teach as true, be washed for the forgiveness of sins and regeneration, and live in the manner Christ handed down.” The conditions Justin outlined here helped to make the Eucharistic celebration unique and orderly. On the other hand, we must observe that a condition that would have blended culture and Christianity was absent from Justin’s conditions.
Justin’s explanations were not mere teachings. They were also prophetic because many arguments have risen regarding the nature of what we call the body and blood of Christ or the real presence. Justin continued to give the special features of the Sunday Eucharistic celebration and also to explain why Christians celebrate on Sunday. LaVerdiere (1996:178) outlines these features in this way:

Notably, before the prayers were offered, someone read from the memoirs of the apostles or the writing of the prophets, so long as there was time, and the president admonished and exhorted everyone to imitate the good things they heard… Sunday is the first day of the week; the day on which God, transforming the darkness and matter, created the world. It is also the day Our Saviour Jesus Christ rose from the dead.

Though Justin never used the word inculturation in his writings, there are some areas of emphasis in his teachings that are pointers to inculturation. Such areas as the use of local language and peoples’ participation are of great help in our understanding of inculturation. The conscious awareness of the integration of the Eucharistic celebration into the culture of a particular local church, for example, encourages active participation. This active participation promotes inculturation because it enables the participants, Catholics, to appreciate the relevance of what they are celebrating—the Eucharist that is rooted in their local culture.

One primary lesson that Catholics in Mutare diocese can learn from Justin and his teaching in relation to inculturation of the Eucharist is the ability to teach the people thoroughly well in the language they understand and through their symbols. Proper catechesis on the significance of the Eucharist and the importance of inculturation are very necessary in Mutare diocese. These take time, patience and a mastery of the culture of the people. In Justin, we can see that he not only taught what he was convinced of, but he also experienced some of the consequences of what he taught. That is, there is life in Christ through martyrdom. In other words, we in Mutare must imitate Christ and Justin by teaching our people with all we are and all we have so as to achieve the goal to inculturate the Eucharist in our diocese.
6.2.3 Hippolytus of Rome

Another personality in our study of the Eucharist in the early Church is Hippolytus of Rome. Attention here is focused on the document attributed to his name, so as to examine how the document outlines the essential aspects of the Eucharist. The little known about the personality of Hippolytus is given by Pier (1987:97) in this text:

The other great anti-Gnostic polemicist at the turn of the second and third centuries was Hippolytus, known also as Hippolytus of Rome. In reality, nothing precise is known of this mysterious and enigmatic figure...Whatever the case may be, it appears that this Hippolytus was a man of considerable education and a Roman priest of Eastern origin (he wrote in Greek at a later date) who, because of disciplinary conflict, became at one point the head of a schismatic, rigorist community at Rome in conflict with the Bishop, Callistus. He made reparation for his schism by his martyrdom around 235.

While Bouyer (1968:162) calls him “bishop and martyr,” Senn (1987:16) refers to him simply as “a presbyter of the Church of Rome who later became an antipope.” Though not much is known about Hippolytus, the document attributed to him, which bears testimony to his existence, is the main concern in this study. It is hoped that this document can help towards an understanding of the Eucharist and shed some light on the possibilities of inculturation. This document is called “The Apostolic Tradition.” Writing about it, Sheerin (1986:354-356) has this to say:

Hippolytus’ Apostolic Tradition dates from c 215. Its original Greek text has been lost, but it survives in a number of oriental versions and adaptations, and, in part, in a Latin version. The work is a polemically conservative guide to ecclesiastical observances... The prayers are models; they do not necessarily represent the Roman practice of c 215...

In order to analyze this highly quoted ancient text, I examine a part of this document that focuses on the Eucharist as presented by Sheerin. The function of a deacon in the Eucharistic celebration is well recognized. Hence, the document begins with the role of the deacon:

Let the deacons present the oblation to him [the Bishop], and, after placing his hands upon it, along with [the] other presbytery, let him say, giving thanks:

The Lord be with you.
And let all say: And with your spirit (2 Tim. 4:22) etc…
And then let him continue as follows:
We give thanks to you, O God, through your beloved servant Jesus Christ, whom you have sent to us in the last times (Ga. 4:4) as Savior and Redeemer and Angel of your Will (Is. 9:5). He is your inseparable Word; through whom you have created all things (Jn. 1:3), and in Him you were well pleased (Mtt. 3:17). You sent Him from Heaven into the womb of the Virgin, and He, dwelling in the womb, was made flesh, and was manifested as your Son, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin. When He had fulfilled your Will, and obtained (Ac. 20:28) a holy people (1Pet. 2:9) for you, He stretched forth His hands when He suffered, that he might free from suffering those who believe in you. When He was handed over to His voluntary suffering, that He might destroy death, and burst the bonds of the devil, and tread upon the nether world, and illumine the just, and fix the limit and reveal the Resurrection, taking bread, He gave thanks to you, and said: Take, eat, this is my body, which will be broken for you. Similarly also the cup, saying: This is my blood, which is shed for you. When you do this, you are making a remembrance of me. Wherefore remembering His death and Resurrection, we offer to you the bread and the cup, giving thanks to you because you have accounted us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you. And we ask that you send your Holy Spirit upon the oblation of Holy Church, and that gathering it together into one, you grant to all who partake of the holy things a fullness of the Holy Spirit for the strengthening of faith in truth, that we may praise you and glorify you through your servant Jesus Christ, through whom be glory and honor to you, to the Father and to the Son with the Holy Spirit in your Holy Church, both now, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

A close look at this Eucharistic Prayer shows that it contains: dialogue, praise of the Father for the work of the Son, Institution Narrative, Anamnesis, Epiclesis and Doxology. That is, it is a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of Christ, a memorial—recalling what Christ did, and the invocation of the Holy Spirit to sanctify the gifts. The last part of the prayer blends well the praise, the honor and the glory that belong to the Trinity and this is what we call the ‘doxology.’

Here, it seems, lies the importance of this ancient document. No wonder, therefore, that KilPatrick (1975:17) calls it “the oldest specimen of Eucharistic Prayer that we have.” The text itself is biblical from the dialogue to the doxology, that is, a method of ending a prayer almost quite similar to Pauline practice. The first part of the prayer helps to bring all the members of the congregation into participation. The text is truly Eucharistic because it opens with a thanks giving to God for the saving acts of Christ, beginning with the incarnation and ending with the resurrection, emphasizing the institution narrative as well as recognizing the power of the Holy Spirit. Hippolytus did not want to make his Eucharistic prayer a norm. Thus, Bouyer (1968:165) observes: “Hippolytus gives his
prayers as models and not as set formulas.” Senn (1987:16) agrees with Bouyer’s observation when he reports: “Hippolytus notes that the new Bishop is not bound to use his prayer, but rather is free to pray in his own words and according to his own capacity.” It is always said that nothing is all-perfect. Power (1995:95) points out the limitation of the document in the following remark but quickly acknowledges the flexibility of the text:

It is sometimes remarked that the prayer of the Apostolic Tradition gives little attention to creation, but develops the second and the third of the blessings of its Jewish model. Since, however, the age was still one of some improvisation the celebrant had room to amplify this if so inspired.

I think the leaders of our present Church in Mutare have much to learn from Hippolytus both in originality and in creating an atmosphere and conditions that enhance inculturation. By this I mean that our Eucharistic prayers are yet to be the original creation of our people in Mutare where they would be composed by our liturgists and modeled according to our own Shona culture. For inculturation to be fully implemented, it is necessary for the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe to have its own Eucharistic prayer, which in turn, will benefit Mutare diocese.

6.2.4 Ambrose

Another well-known Father of the Church who contributed to an understanding of the Eucharist is Ambrose. Ambrose was born between AD 339 and AD 340. He was known as a liturgist, and a promoter of the Eucharist, and also had an administrative career. By AD 370, he had risen so high in administration that he was the governor of Northern Italy with his seat at Milan. With the death of the Arian bishop Auxentius, Pier (1987:256) tells us, “Ambrose was elected bishop by popular acclaim on December 7, 374, without even having been baptized yet.” Later, Ambrose pursued his religious studies under the supervision of a priest called Simplicianus, through whom Ambrose became acquainted with the sacred scriptures. Of his many priorities, the improvement of the liturgy of the church in Milan was uppermost, hence the popular appellation “Ambrosian Liturgy” (see Pier 1987:256).
Though Ambrose was prominently known as a liturgist, he also made a contribution in the building up of the Eucharistic teaching during his time. This contribution to the teaching of the Eucharist by Ambrose is praised by Gakpe-Ntsri (1989:187) as follows: “Just as Cyril of Jerusalem was credited with being the pioneer of the ‘conversion theory’ in the East, so Ambrose receives credit for introducing ‘the idea of conversion of elements… into the West.” Crockett (1989:96) agreeing with Gakpe-Ntsri on this idea of conversion theory, goes further to illustrate how this conversion theory was taught and explained in the West: “This conversionist conception of the Eucharistic presence was transmitted to the West by Ambrose, who was the first to introduce the language of change into the Eucharistic vocabulary of the Western Church.” By way of explaining what this conversion of elements means, Crockett (1989:97) goes on to interpret the mind of Ambrose in these words: “At the time of the consecration, therefore, a change takes place in the ‘natures’ of the elements by the words of Christ…” Ambrose skillfully tried to explain what he meant by this change and when it occurs by appealing to the Scriptures. Liesting (1968:5) has a detailed record of this explanation:

He, who that day, before he was going to suffer, took bread in his sacred hands—before the consecration it is bread; but once the words of Christ are pronounced over it, it is the body of Christ. Before Christ’s words, the chalice is filled with wine and water; but through the efficacy of Christ’s words it becomes his Blood which has redeemed the world.

Though Ambrose was making a frantic effort to explain how the Eucharistic species of bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus Christ, little did he know that he was laying the foundation of some theological terms like transubstantiation or transignification. These terms have their proper place in the discussion on real Presence in the next chapter.

In our effort to incultrate the Eucharist in our diocese, the hierarchy in the diocese has much to learn from Ambrose, whose courage enabled him to introduce and promote a liturgy that appealed to the people at his time in his diocese. For example, as already stated, the diocese of Milan is well known for the ‘Ambrosian Liturgy.’ Ambrose’s achievement lies in his creative ability to promote liturgy. As a dynamic and ongoing
process, inculturation also favours creativity. Shorter (1997:11-13) insists on this creative aspect of inculturation in the words: “[Inculturation] is the creative and dynamic relationship between the Christian message and the culture of a particular people.” Recognizing the contribution of Ambrose in the development of liturgy, Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:61) remarks: “These melodies were composed by St. Ambrose or his followers for use in the Ambrosian Rite… In recent years the syllabic form of these chants has been adapted to the vernacular with some success.”

A big challenge for our diocese is to do much work on inculturation so as to improve the quality of Eucharistic celebration where every member of the congregation actively participates at Mass. The active participation as a result of a lively, inculturated Eucharistic celebration can become an important mark by which Mutare diocese is to be known. Inculturation encourages local leadership. In Mutare diocese, therefore, there is need for well-trained liturgists and theologians who will help to lay a good and solid foundation on liturgy, anthropology and the whole Catholic doctrine for all to implement inculturation in the diocese.

6.2.5 Augustine of Hippo

The last Father of the early church to be examined in an attempt to understand the meaning and significance of the Eucharist in the early Church is Augustine. It is also important to examine how Augustine’s teachings on the Eucharist resembled that of Ambrose. Augustine was born in 354 at Thagaste in Numidia, now known as Algeria. At 19, Augustine left his devout Catholic mother and joined Manichaeism—a religious and ethical doctrine under the leadership of Manes, in search of religious truth. Through the preaching of St. Ambrose of Milan, Augustine was inspired and he was converted to Christianity and baptized by Ambrose at the Easter Vigil in 387. After his baptism in Milan, he returned to Africa where he embraced the monastic life. Bishop Valerian of Hippo ordained him a Catholic priest and in 396 he succeeded Valerian and became the bishop of Hippo. About the prolific nature of this African-genius, Martos (1991:40) remarks: “From his consecration in 395 until his death in 430 Augustine preached and
wrote on almost every aspect of the Catholic faith becoming the most influential theologian in the Latin Church until the Middle Ages."

It does not surprise us, therefore, to see Augustine’s teachings on the Eucharist taking diverse forms of exposition. Fundamentally, Augustine’s Eucharistic teaching is characterized by a strong symbolic outlook. In this symbolic outlook, he tried to distinguish between the sign (signum) and the reality (res), which it signified. Augustine found refuge in the ancient understanding of symbolism which Crockett (1989:89) describes thus: “A symbol not only represents that which it signifies, it also participates in that reality and mediates the reality to those who participate in the symbol.” This understanding of symbolism as espoused by Augustine is not opposed to realism; instead, it presupposes it. Thus, Augustine spent time to develop a Eucharistic theology in order to show the relationship between sign and reality. As a working principle, Augustine taught that the signum is the outward visible sign while the res is the invisible reality that it signifies. Liesting gives a long passage to demonstrate Augustine’s teaching on the relationship between sign and reality in relation to the Eucharist:

What you see at the Lord’s Table, you see everyday at your table, if you only notice the external side. Outwardly everything is the same, but the working is totally different, heretofore, as you can see, it is bread and wine; but at the consecration this bread and wine became the Body and Blood of Christ. See there what Christ’s name can accomplish; see there what Christ’s grace achieves. Before and after no change is observable; yet all values are transformed. Previously, the bread was to satisfy the stomach; but now the eating contributes to the nourishment of the life of the soul.

This means that the outward signs of bread and wine in the Eucharist are perceived visibly by the senses and eaten by the mouth. On the other hand, the invisible reality can only be attained by the mind and is only received by faith. Another aspect of Augustine’s teaching on the Eucharist is the Eucharist as a mystery. Lampe (1968:44) highlights this aspect thus: “Augustine dwells more particularly on the thought of the Eucharist as a mystery of the church in union with its Head.” In other words, through the Eucharist, the church becomes the body of Christ and Christ is the head. In effect, the virtue of the Eucharist is unity, whereby Augustine expects that “being made members of Christ’s
body, we may be that which we receive” (see Lampe 1968:54). Gakpe-Ntsri (1989:191) describes Augustine’s mind well in this text:

> If, therefore, you are the body of Christ and his members, your mystery has been placed on the Lord’s Table: you receive your mystery. You reply ‘Amen’ to that which you are, and by replying you consent. For you hear ‘The Body of Christ’, and you reply ‘Amen’. Be a member of the Body of Christ so that your ‘Amen’ may be true.

Augustine’s greatness in his understanding of, and teaching on, the Eucharist is summarized by Crockett (1989:88) in the following lines:

> Augustine’s theology of the Eucharist is of immense importance, because he held together the elements that in the later history of theology became disastrously separated. Both the medieval and the reformation theologians appealed to him as the authority for their Eucharistic doctrines, but neither did justice to the full measure of his thought.

Like Ambrose, Augustine demonstrated his interest in the Eucharist by the way he used signs and symbols to explain its meaning. For Crockett (1989:89), “Augustine’s Eucharistic thought is marked by a strong symbolic outlook.” In the theology of inculturation, signs and symbols play significant roles. Catholics in Mutare diocese can learn from Augustine—this great theologian—the need to discover new cultural symbols that are meaningful to the people in our diocese so as to make the celebration of the Eucharist more meaningful and more interesting. This is where Lumbalala’s (1998:7) statement is very essential when he remarks: “The absence of symbols ruins the flow of liturgy. A symbol does not satisfy the worshiper, but provides a place where hunger grows, where thirst is aroused, and where the desire to go deeper grows”. A good taste of an inculturated Eucharist in Mutare diocese will not only inspire more devotion to the Eucharist, but it will also attract Catholics and Protestants from outside the diocese to join in our Eucharistic celebration. With Augustine, we conclude the patristic period and now turn to the reactions and counter-reactions on various teachings of the Fathers of the Church by both theologians and exegetes of the medieval and reformation periods.
6.3 The Middle Ages (Medieval Period)

Another important period in the history of the Church’s teaching on the Eucharist is the medieval period. While historians assign the medieval period to the time between the fall of Rome in AD 476 and the beginning of the Renaissance, that is, up to the late 15th century, some scholars have dated it from the time of Charlemagne around AD 800. To avoid giving it a specific date, Bouyer (1968:338) remarks: “It is as difficult to tell when this period began as it is to specify the moment when it ended.” In simple terms, *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia* (1991:642) states: “it refers to that ‘middle time’ between the ancient and modern era”. In relation to the Eucharistic practices, Crockett (1989:106) tells us how the link between the patristic period and the medieval era was momentarily maintained in this account:

The Eucharistic traditions of Augustine and Ambrose were transmitted to the early Middle Ages initially through Isidore of Seville (ca. 560-636). Isidore combined these two traditions in his own thought. He spoke about the bread and wine of the Eucharist becoming the body and blood of Christ through transformation…

However, it did not take a long time before certain Eucharistic controversies started to surface in the medieval period. Liesting (1968:7), highlighting one such problem briefly reports: “A conflict arose as to whether the Eucharist is or is not a symbol.” The threat this conflict posed is rightly pointed out by Crockett (1989:107) when he asserts: “Once the unity between the symbol and the reality begins to dissolve, however, the presence of the reality seems to be threatened when symbolical language is used.” Consequently, the symbol-reality imagery was no longer seen as Augustine saw and taught it. For some, therefore, there was a separation between symbol and reality, whereby to talk of symbol is without reality while for some others, it was merely reality without much emphasis on the symbol. This ‘reality’ controversy brought about another problem, where Berengar, a monk at Tours, assumed that since the bread and wine did not change their appearance after the words of consecration were said, they were still bread and wine. He concluded by saying that Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is spiritual, not physical. Berengar’s teaching was condemned as heretical. In 1059, he was made to take an oath professing that:
The bread and wine which are placed on the altar after consecration are not only the sacrament but also the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that they are palpably handled and broken by hands of the priest and torn by the teeth of the faithful not simply as a sacrament but as a true fact (see Martos 1991:232).

Private Mass was another feature of the Eucharist in the Middle Ages, which developed and spread fast. This refers to a Eucharistic celebration offered by a single priest without a congregation. This practice started and spread through the monks. Martos (1991:226) highlights this point well in this text:

Soon many monasteries were filled with great numbers of priests who could not all gather around the chapel altar to celebrate the liturgy together, and those who wanted to offer the Eucharistic sacrifice daily began to do so privately. The monks naturally carried out this practice with them to their mission fields where they often worked alone.

On Sundays and feast days, the Eucharist was celebrated in public but on other days it was a private Mass. Since the Eucharist was celebrated in Latin, which was the dominant language, only a few understood the language, mostly the clergy. Martos (1991:227) describes this situation well when he comments: “The Mass for most people became a religious performance to watch and listen to rather than a liturgy to participate in.” The effect of this practice is still felt in different ways in our time and this is what inculturation wants to correct by instilling in the minds of the people the spirit of active participation through lively celebration. The absence of participation at Mass and the inability to understand what was happening did not dispose the people well to receive Holy Communion at mass.

As Martos (1991:227) puts it, “the growing sense of Christ’s miraculous presence in the Eucharist, however, led more and more people to abstain from communion altogether…” In other words, the condition under which the Eucharist was celebrated during the medieval period, where people did not understand what was going on and did not participate in the actual celebration, made them aliens at Mass. Consequently, many Christians did not feel comfortable to receive Holy Communion since the mystery that surrounded its celebration overwhelmed them. In order to make up for their lack of comprehension and inability to participate fully, the people’s worship came to
concentrate more on the adoration of the host. After consecration, therefore, priests raised
the host over their heads to enable the congregation to look at it and adore it. Power
(1995:184) correctly observes: “Over a period of time, looking replaced eating and
drinking as the primary means of communion with Christ present in the sacrament”. Over
and above, the medieval period was chiefly characterized by discussions on two main
issues, namely: the Eucharist as a sacrifice and the real presence of Christ in the
Eucharist. Eucharist as a sacrifice was a dominant issue in the medieval period, which
lingered up to the reformation period. I intend to discuss this topic fully in the next
chapter. However, for the moment, Sipuka’s (2000:39) explanation suffices:

Stated briefly, the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice was generally understood by
medieval theologians as a memorial of Christ’s sacrifice. This, however, is not just a
commemoration that only brings the reality of the event present. The Eucharist, therefore,
is a sacrifice in this sense of being a commemoration, i.e., as sacramentally representing
the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ.

The medieval period has a serious warning for all of us in Mutare diocese. That is, if we
do not intensify inculturation and catechesis on the Eucharist, the Catholics in Mutare
diocese will not only celebrate what they do not understand, but they will also lose
interest because what they celebrate will have no meaning to them. A well inculturated
and indepth catechesis on the Eucharist will help Mutare diocese to avoid similar
aberrations on the understanding and celebration of the Eucharist as was prevalent in the
medieval period. Though there were some abuses in the celebration of the Eucharist,
especially an emphasis on private Mass and its financial gains by some priests in the
medieval period, we can also attest that the period also witnessed some doctrinal
challenges which enabled it to lay solid foundations on those theological issues, as we see
in the life and work of Thomas Aquinas and especially in the pronouncements of the
Council of Trent.

6.3.1 Thomas Aquinas and the Eucharist

One of the well-known Catholic scholars of the medieval period was Thomas Aquinas,
who also has a contribution to make on the understanding of the Eucharist. Thomas
Aquinas’s teaching on the Eucharist centers mainly on sacrifice and real presence.
Aquinas lived from 1225 to 1274. He was a Dominican and a student of Albert the Great,
also a Dominican and an outstanding teacher. Aquinas won many credits for himself as a result of his contributions to the Church. His most important work is called ‘Summa Theologica.’ Commenting on the importance of this great work, Glenn (1999:vii) remarks: “The Summa Theologica is the most important work with which St. Thomas—great Dominican scholar and saint of the thirteenth century—enriched the world.” On his philosophical contribution, Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:932) has this to say: “Because the work of St. Thomas in the Middle Ages is the summit of Catholic thought, being a synthesis of previous truths and wisdom, it is enjoined on all Catholic educational institutions to use Thomistic philosophy as a basis for their programs.” The philosophy based on the writings of St. Thomas is called Thomism. Aquinas’ contribution in the field of theology, especially in the development of the sacraments, was also enormous. Martos (1991:239) explains how Aquinas’ understanding of the Eucharist grew in these words:

Aquinas’ understanding of the Eucharist, like his understanding of other sacraments, grew out of his sacramental experiences as they were guided and formed by his faith in the doctrines of the Church, his knowledge of the writings of the Fathers, and his meditations on the Scriptures.

In other words, Thomas did not rely solely on his university learning, which in part had its own contribution. But to a larger extent, he was a man of faith who practiced what he taught; a humble, faithful scholar, who remained loyal to the teachings of the Church; and a lover of Scriptures, who nourished his soul with the word of God through meditations. Aquinas’ contribution on the Eucharist did not pass unnoticed by Power in his writing, where he makes this brilliant comment: “[Aquinas’] Eucharistic treatise is an excellent example of the endeavour to give a systematic and scientific explanation of the sacrament, in keeping with the ideals of learning and with the practices of the time” (1995:163).

Speaking about Aquinas’ understanding and teaching of the Eucharist as it relates to sacrifice, Clark (2000:138-139) states: “As Aquinas put it, ‘the Eucharist is the perfect sacrament of our Lord’s passion, because it contains Christ himself who endured it.”
With reference to the congregation at Eucharistic celebration, Clark (2000:139) continues: “We are, however, not offering a dead victim. As the prayer says, we are offering ‘a holy and living’ sacrifice.” However, there were other areas of contention besides sacrifice during the time of Aquinas. Power (1995:209) gives us these areas in this summary form: “Theological questions on the Eucharist at the time when Thomas was writing centered on the truth of Christ’s presence, the manner of his presence, the efficacy of the sacrament, and the representation of the passion.” Indeed, Thomas wrote extensively on these topics. Attention here will be given to the manner of Christ’s presence in the Eucharist, which brings us to that theological term called “transubstantiation”.

This issue occupied Aquinas’ attention for quite some time. Liesting (1968:9-10) is right when he remarks: “As a child of his time [Aquinas] has indeed deliberated much on [the idea of] transubstantiation held by the Church.” In summary, the term ‘transubstantiation’ as understood by the Catholic Church postulates that at the time of consecration by the priest, the reality or substance of the elements of the Eucharist change but their appearances remain those of bread and wine. Martos (1991:236) says that Aquinas “accepted the theory of transubstantiation and developed it with philosophical sophistication.” Aquinas’s contribution came in the form of explanation, using Aristotle’s metaphysics. Crockett (1989:119) demonstrates Aquinas’ explanation thus: “In the language of Aristotelian metaphysics in which Thomas Aquinas explained the doctrine, the ‘substance’ (i.e., the reality that underlies the material elements) changes, while the accidents (i.e., their outward empirical qualities) remain.”

As a great doctor of the Church, Aquinas’ main preoccupation was to develop the themes bordering on some aspects of the Eucharist. He was not preoccupied with inculturation as the African church is now, especially in Mutare diocese. Aquinas was indeed a child of his time. This is because when he discussed the effects of ‘the Holy Eucharist,’ he spoke more of its spiritual benefits. In conclusion, Power (1995:240) summarizes the contribution of Aquinas to the understanding of the Eucharist as follows:
In short, the Eucharistic theology of Aquinas fostered an intellectual understanding in line with the Aristotelian interest of the times, expressed the symbolic relation of the sacrament to the need for order and justice, enhanced the role of the individual person through its stress on faith, and fostered a contemplative participation in its celebration.

It is clear, therefore, that Aquinas’ Eucharistic theology was multi-dimensional. It has also an ecclesial dimension because it fosters unity in the Church.

This is because Aquinas never deviated from his predecessors and their teachings. Instead, he developed and added more flesh to their teachings, thereby maintaining unity of purpose. This unity of purpose, taught and practiced by the Church, is derived from Christ and manifests itself in the love Christ has for his followers. In order to highlight this love and unity in the Eucharist, Aquinas comments:

And so, in order to imprint the immensity of this love more deeply in the hearts of the faithful, at the Last Supper, when the Lord celebrated the Pasch with his disciples and was about to pass from this world to his Father, he instituted this sacrament as a perpetual memorial of his person. It fulfilled the types of the old law; it was the greatest of the miracles he worked; and he left it as a unique consolation to those who were desolate at his departure (In the Divine Office Vol. 3, 1974:32).

The centrality of this passage is the love which motivated Christ to give himself to his disciples at the Last Supper—what we celebrate now as the Eucharist. The realization of the importance of this love at the Eucharistic celebration encourages participation—an important element in inculturation.

The explanation of the meaning of the word ‘transubstantiation’ by Aquinas was another important contribution in his Eucharistic theology. As Aquinas helped to give an outstanding explanation of ‘transubstantiation in his time, we must find a convincing explanation of the Eucharist, through inculturation, for our people in Mutare diocese. Thus, Eucharistic celebrations must be integrated into Shona culture. The resultant effect of this integration will be active participation, which Aquinas referred to in his
Eucharistic theology. Since inculturation favors active participation, it may be argued that Aquinas indirectly encouraged inculturation in his writings.

6.4 The Reformation

From Aquinas we may move straight to the Reformation period, which is equally important for the understanding of the Eucharist in the Church. Though the reformers were not strictly interested in inculturation, here too efforts will be made to examine closely if there are some traces of inculturation in their teachings on the Eucharist specifically. It is important to state from the beginning that the views of the reformers are presented in this section as they were expressed by the ‘leading reformers’ themselves. The term ‘Reformation’ can be used in different senses. As a movement, Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:815) describes it as:

A complex movement of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries that divided Christians into two distinct groups: Roman Catholics, marked by adherence to the Roman Pontiff and the historic formulations of the Faith; and a group of other Christian bodies, loosely united as ‘Protestants.’

This division came about as a result of several factors that weakened the Church in the late medieval period. Outstanding among these factors were the abuses that had crept into the Church. One prominent abuse at the time was the ‘sale of indulgences’. As far as the Eucharist was concerned, the two primary areas of contention for the Reformation were the tenet of Eucharistic sacrifice and belief in the real presence.

The third issue—transubstantiation—was completely rejected by the Reformers. On the question of sacrifice, the official Catholic teaching states: “The sacrifice of the Mass is not only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving nor a simple commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished on the cross, but a propitiatory sacrifice” (see the Official Catechetical Text 1999:80). Luther rejected the teaching that the Mass is a sacrifice. His reason for rejecting this teaching was his understanding of grace as “the offer of mercy to sinners who believed in God’s saving word and approached the table in faith” (Power, 1995:252). With this understanding, Luther ruled out any notion of priestly mediation.
Since Luther emphasized faith more than good works, he saw justification as a gift from God to his sinful children rather than as the result of an individual’s effort to earn one’s salvation. For Luther, therefore, God’s gift is gratuitous regardless of peoples’ efforts and good works. Simply put, Luther saw the Eucharist as a “sacrament, not sacrifice, and [a] gift, not mediation” (Power, 1995:252). Luther also encouraged the use of the vernacular in worship. This explains why all the documents he used were translated into the German language. The vernacular, as already suggested earlier, is a very important tool in the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation, though not sufficient by itself.

Zwingli, another early reformer, preferred to use the term the “Lord’s Supper,” a notion which Dugmore records thus: “For Zwingli, the Lord’s Supper was a ‘mere memorial’…with stress on the idea of the testament signed by the blood of Christ, the new law, and the promise whose office is to lead us to Christ by the right way of faith, which faith makes us partakers of Christ” (1968:63). John Calvin—who initiated the ‘reformed tradition’—also rejected the idea of the Eucharist as a sacrifice on the ground of what Crockett (1989:150) refers to as “the fundamental theological principle governing Calvin’s thought as his affirmation of the sovereignty of the glory of God.” This implies that, for Calvin, our salvation depends solely on the free operation of God’s grace, which must be received in faith. The next area of contention was the notion of ‘Real Presence.’

The Catholic teaching on ‘real presence’ is that “in the Eucharist, Christ himself is present with his body and his blood” (see the Official Catechetical Text, 1999:62). To a certain degree, both Luther and Calvin agreed on the notion of real presence. For example, Power (1995:252) tells us that: “Luther held ardently to the real presence though, because of his opposition to the devotions centering on the reserved sacrament, he emphasized the moment of the actual rite and reception in speaking of this presence.” This means that “the sacramental presence is limited to the time of the administration of the sacrament” (Dugmore1968:67). That is, for Luther, as soon as the communion is over, the cleaning of the cup is done and the people are dismissed, there is no longer real presence. On the other hand, the Catholic Church teaches that Christ is ever present in the
specifies. Reporting on Calvin’s tenet on real presence, Crockett (1989:151) attests: “Calvin affirms the real presence but wants to preserve the freedom of God in relation to the material signs.” McDonnell (1967:226) makes Calvin’s thought clearer in these words: “Though Christ is with us in the presence of his majesty, he is not with us according to the presence of his flesh.” Thus, Calvin’s pre-occupations here are two, namely: to highlight and emphasize the glorified Christ and to maintain the humanity of Christ. For Calvin, therefore, Christ can only be present in his glorified form, not in the flesh. This negates the Catholic teaching of Christ’s presence in body and soul. Power (1995:253) summarizes Calvin’s position on both Eucharistic sacrifice and real presence in this passage:

John Calvin’s Eucharistic teaching, like that of Luther, is not a denial of the traditional doctrine but a search for an explanation that would seem more satisfactory than transubstantiation and that would foster sacramental communion rather than offering of sacrifice or devotions that centered on the reserved sacrament.

Though Power tries to accommodate Calvin’s teaching on real presence, it is obvious that Calvin’s problem of accepting devotions to the Blessed Sacrament led him to present Christ as two separate entities, where Christ as glorified operates independently of his humanity. This apparently placed Calvin in a difficult position. That is why McDonnell (1967:224) concludes: “Having rejected the Roman Catholic and Lutheran explanations on the one hand, and the Zwinglian explanation on the other, Calvin was at pains to elaborate an explanation, which only incidentally stands between the traditions.”

There was a significant difference between Luther and Zwingli concerning the real presence. For example, “while Luther followed Biel in asserting the real presence of Christ on the altar (though not by transubstantiation), Zwingli held to the figurative sense…” (Dugmore 1968:66). In other words, while Luther cautiously affirmed the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, Zwingli saw it as merely symbolic. Their differences notwithstanding, Power (1995:251) documents areas of agreement among the Reformers:
- The removal of all mention of sacrifice that smacked of propitiation.
- The retention of various Prayers of memorial thanksgiving and intercession but without indication of priestly sacrifice.
- The importance given to the Lord’s Prayer, as the one authentic prayer
- The gradual introduction of the vernacular into all parts of the rite.
- The primacy given to receiving the sacrament as a communion in Christ’s body and blood and the connection between this and the proclamation of the gospel.

Different people have different ways of looking at the effects of the Reformation. The aspect of the Reformation that is related to Eucharistic inculturation—though indirectly—is Luther’s emphasis on the importance of the vernacular both in the understanding of the Bible and in the celebration of the Eucharist. In an appreciative analysis of Luther’s works, the Encyclopedia of Theology (1975:1333) has this to say: “The most important literary production of …[Luther’s] time at the Wartburg was the translation of the NT into German, a work of immense religious impact.” This contribution by Luther, and later by other Reformers, was not openly acknowledged at that polemic time. It is a fact that the use of the vernacular endeared the Reformers to their compatriots. Furthermore, the acceptance of the vernacular in those countries from where the Reformers came was seen not only as a protest against, but also as a victory over, Rome, where Latin was the order of the day.

The use of vernacular is not only important in society; it is also an essential tool for effective inculturation. Onwubiko (1991:30) illustrates the importance of the vernacular in Africa thus: “For the African, then, if an individual is not able to communicate with the native language, the individual, ideologically, puts himself [herself] outside the community.” This wise saying by Onwubiko was very clear to the reformers who did not want to alienate themselves from their own people. In order to win the sympathy and support of their own people, they capitalized on the importance of the local language. I consider this a wise decision by the Reformers, both as an advantage for their mission and as a foresight towards inculturation.
In summary, it may be said that the Reformation brought about a great awareness of the need to initiate some practical and reasonable changes so as to correct the prevailing abuses in the Church as well as the need to tackle those theological issues revolving around the Eucharist. As a period of controversy, while the Catholic Church was busy counteracting the claims of the Reformers, the latter were gaining the support of their countrymen and women by using the local language that united them—a move that would foster inculturation later. The challenge to bring about these changes, to refute some of the “erroneous teachings” of the Reformers, to stamp out the prevailing abuses in the Church as well as to issue authentic teachings on the Eucharist fell on the Council of Trent.

6.5 The Council of Trent
The first ecumenical council to be examined in this chapter in relation to the Eucharist is the Council of Trent. In addition to analyzing of the teachings of the Council of Trent, I will examine whether these teachings had any traces of inculturation in them. The Council of Trent was the 19th ecumenical council of the Catholic Church and was convened by Pope Paul III on December 13, 1545. Political interruptions as a result of political unrests in Europe notwithstanding, the council was able to have 25 sessions with the last one concluding in December 1563. The decrees of the council were finally approved on January 26, 1564 by Pope Pius IV. Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:941) records the purpose of the Council thus: “The Council was convoked to address the spread of the protestant Reformation and to institute a range of ecclesiastical reforms long recognized as urgently needed.” Summarizing the purpose of this council, Martos (1991:88) reports: “Its purpose was primarily practical: reform within the Catholic Church.”

In examining the Council’s teaching on the Eucharist we shall highlight the major decisions taken by it in areas relating to Eucharistic sacrifice and ‘real presence.’ On the other hand, some attention will be given to some aspects of the Eucharist that have not received any attention so far such as the Eucharistic meal.
In reaction to the Protestants, who unanimously denied the sacrificial character of the Mass, the council asserted that the Mass is a “true and real sacrifice and not only a meal in which Christ is consumed” (Liesting 1968:51). In order to bring out the Council’s teaching on the Eucharist as a sacrifice, Liesting documents below the complete text of the council on this matter:

Another High Priest, according to the order of Melchizedek, our Lord Jesus Christ, had to rise because of the imperfection of the Old Testament. Though Christ was about to offer himself to God the Father once and for all on the altar of the Cross through death in order to effect an external redemption, our God and Lord did not want his priesthood to be discontinued by his death. In accordance with man’s nature, at the Last Supper Christ left a visible sacrifice to his beloved spouse, the Church, on the night he was betrayed. Therefore, the bloody sacrifice, which once and for all was completed on the cross had to be re-presented… and the memory of it has to remain till the end of time. The salvific power of this sacrifice has to be rendered present to pardon the sins daily committed by us. He declared himself appointed High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek and therefore sacrificed his body and blood under the species of bread and wine to God the Father. He presented these as food under the same species to his apostles, who at that moment were appointed as priests of the New Covenant. To them as well as to their successors in the priesthood, he gave the command to celebrate this sacrifice saying: ‘Do this as a memorial to me’. This, the Catholic Church has always understood and taught. For after the celebration of the old Passover, which was celebrated as a memorial of the exodus from Egypt, he instituted a new Pasch: for he allowed himself to be offered under visible signs by his Church, who performed this by means of her priests, as a memorial of his exodus from this world to the Father.

In this long text the council was able to articulate its mind as well as to address the various points raised by the Reformers. From this text, the salient issues which the council emphasized in its teaching on the Eucharist can be underlined. In the first place, the Council tried to authenticate the validity of the sacrificial character of the Eucharist by referring its origin to Christ. In order to see that the Eucharist is continued, the council stressed the institution of the priesthood by Christ himself. This is because the Reformers had earlier denied the “cultic priesthood—ministerial priesthood—in preference for the common priesthood of all believers” (Gakpe-Ntsri 1989:225). Commenting on the place of the Mass in relation to the sacrifice of the cross, Liesting (1968:52) notes: “The Mass keeps the memory of the sacrifice of the cross alive and applies its fruits.” According to the council of Trent, the Mass and the sacrifice of the cross are the same.
For more explanation on this relationship between the Mass and the sacrifice of the cross, Gakpe-Ntsri (1989:226) highlights the Council’s teaching:

Trent, thus, declares that Christ, who offered himself as a victim for our sins on the cross, is the same victim that the priest offers at Mass. The only difference between the sacrifice on the cross and the Eucharistic sacrifice lies in the manner of offering; for, while the former is bloody, the latter is bloodless.

The emphasis, therefore, is the re-presentation of the same sacrifice of the cross at Mass. The council also attests that the sacrifice of the Mass is propitiatory. The propitiatory effect of this Eucharistic sacrifice, Sipuka (2000:52) explains, “presupposes faith and a good inner disposition towards God”. With the council’s teaching in mind, it becomes clear that the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Mass does not detract from the sacrifice of the cross.

Having established its ground on the relationship between the Mass and the Sacrifice of the cross, with Christ as its victim, Trent also tried to show how Christ is always present under the species or what is called real presence. Below, Liesting (1968:227) presents the council’s text that affirms the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist:

This has always been the belief of the Church of God that immediately after the consecration the true body and blood of our Lord, together with His soul and divinity, exist under the species of bread and wine. The body exists under the species of bread and the blood under the species of wine by virtue of the words. But the body too exists under the species of wine, the blood under the species of bread, and the soul under both species in virtue of the natural connection and concomitance by which the parts of Christ the Lord, who has already risen from the dead to die no more (cf. Rom. 6:9), are united together.

With this text, the Council tried to answer the reformers according to their various positions. For example, when Zwingli said that Christ’s presence in the Eucharist is figurative or symbolic, the Council maintained that it was real; when Calvin separated the majesty of Christ from his flesh, a notion that tends to emphasize only the divinity of Christ, the council insisted that Christ is always united. Even to those who accused the Church of not receiving Christ in full when he is received under the bread alone, the
Council held that Christ is never divided since it is the same Christ in both species of bread and wine. This means, according to the Catholic teaching that Christ is complete in both species. Power (1995:255) summarizes the council’s mind and teaching on the real presence in this report:

As its key point, the Council taught and defined the substantial presence of Christ in the sacrament, in either kind, body and blood, soul and divinity. Positively, this upheld the doctrine of substantial presence. Negatively, it excluded the idea of presence only in sign or only in effective power, or the idea of a presence that would be restricted to the moment of communion.

In other words, the council faulted the various ideas of the Reformers on Christ’s presence, either when it is restricted to the moment of communion—Luther—or only in effective power—Calvin or even the presence in sign only—Zwingli. Having affirmed that Christ is really and truly present under the species as a sacrificial victim, Trent also taught that in receiving the Eucharist, the communicant truly receives the body and blood of Christ. Thus, the council affirmed that Christ is wholly present in each of the species. In a way, the Council justified the Church’s practice of giving Holy Communion to the people under one kind; hence the council declared. “The whole and entire Christ…is received under the species of bread alone” (see Gakpe-Ntsri, 1989:230). With this elaborate teaching, the council wanted to emphasize that “a full participation in Christ’s Paschal Mystery requires a union with him through the sacramental reception of his body and blood” (see Gakpe-Ntsri, 1989:230).

In view of this emphasis on the need to receive Christ in the communion, Power (1995:258) makes this observation: “It is also clear that in the course of the council, the conciliar members made progress in encouraging more frequent communion by the faithful.” In part, therefore, Emminghaus (1978:23) is right when he asserts that: “The Mass involves a meal”; on the other hand, he warns, “but it is not simply a meal”. What we partake at Mass is the Eucharistic meal, that is, the Holy Communion. Beside the fact that the council limited itself to “the principal points controverted by the reformer” (Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia 1991:941), it made a frantic effort to produce solid teachings on the Eucharist and to suggest real practical reforms that kept the Catholic Church on track till the Second Vatican Council.
Though the council of Trent made no direct reference to inculturation, its insistence on the proper formation for Catholic priests is of great significance to inculturation. It is important to mention that it was the Council of Trent that encouraged the training of priests in seminaries. Among the reforms introduced by Trent, the training of priests in seminaries has a special place in Martos’s assessment. Martos (1991:93) acknowledges the need for discipline among priests and adequate training before ordination in these words: “In setting strict standards for priestly conduct it [Trent] gradually eliminated the worst elements from the clergy. And by requiring seminary training for all future priests it insured that the sacraments [including the Eucharist] would be better understood.” The establishment of seminaries by Trent has an indirect relationship to inculturation because the existence of seminaries facilitated the recruitment of local clergy which is necessary for inculturation. Furthermore, it was in seminaries of recent centuries that future priests were taught the importance of inculturation with greater emphasis.

6.6 Vatican II

The next ecumenical council to be examined here occurred in our modern time. In the Catholic Church’s chronological record on ecumenical councils, the Second Vatican Council (Vatican II) is the twenty-first. This modern Council was announced by Pope John XXIII on January 25, 1959, with its first session being on October 11, 1962. It took place in Rome, at Vatican City. *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia* (1991:954) explains the Pope’s aims for convoking the council in this order: “The Pope’s stated objectives in calling the Council were to seek the renewal of the Church and to modernize its forms and institutions. Central to Pope John’s overall hopes for the Council was the fostering of unity among Christians.” In all, 16 documents were produced: four Constitutions, three Declarations and nine Decrees. It later fell on the hands of Pope Paul VI in 1963 to complete the work of the Council, which finally came to a close in 1965.

6.6.1 Vatican II and the Eucharist

Our main concern in the outcome of the Council, the Eucharist, falls under the broad heading, “The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy” (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*—SC). Chapter 2 of this document introduces our theme—the Eucharist—with the full title:
“The Most Sacred Mystery of the Eucharist.” It is in this perspective that Gakpe-Ntsri (1989:244) asserts: “Vatican II places the Eucharist in the context of the Paschal Mystery.” By referring to the Eucharist as a mystery, the Council links it directly to the saving work of Christ, which culminates in his sacrificial death on the cross. To bring these events into focus, the council declares:

At the Last Supper, on the night he was betrayed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his Body and Blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a Paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace and a pledge of future glory is given to us (SC No. 47).

Indeed, the Theology of the Eucharist as understood and taught by Vatican II is brought out in the above text. Thus, the Council’s understanding of the Eucharist as a sacrifice is closely linked to Christ’s ministry and death. In other words, what is said about Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross equally applies to the Eucharist. In summary, this means that Christ’s sacrifice is seen in the context of his death and glorification. These events sum up the entire mystery of Christ, which is celebrated in the Eucharist.

Another area of emphasis in the Vatican II teaching on the Eucharist is the memorial aspect. Max-Thurian (1983:10) has a beautiful explanation of this memorial, similar to the mind of Vatican II: “It is the memorial of all that God has done for our salvation, in the incarnation, passion, resurrection and ascension of Christ. This presence of Christ, in his sacrificial memorial, is the fruit of the living word and the power of the Holy Spirit.” The living word of Christ, ‘Do this in memory of me,’ that is, the memorial or anamnesis and the invocation of the Holy Spirit known as the epiclesis, are necessary to bring about what we call the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Emminghaus (1978:103) is right to affirm: “The Church has so ordered the entire celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy that its parts correspond to these words and actions of Christ.” Vatican II has a broad view of Christ’s presence as illustrated in this passage:

To accomplish so great a work Christ is always present: in his Church, especially in her liturgical celebrations: he is present in the sacrifice of the Mass not only in the person of
his minister, ‘the same now offering, through the ministry of priests, who formerly offered himself on the cross,’ but especially in the Eucharistic species... he is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church (SC. No. 7).

It is right, therefore, to say that Christ’s actions dominate the entire Eucharistic liturgy. Hence Vatican II declares: “The liturgy, then, is rightly seen as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ” (SC. No. 7). The Council also teaches that “Christ is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised, ‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them’ (Mt. 18:20)” (SC. No.7). With this teaching, the Vatican II reassures her children that when they gather to celebrate the Eucharist, they must participate to the best of their ability because Christ is present among them. The Council’s emphasis on the participation of the people at Mass is in line with the aim of inculturation, that is, to bring about new creation through participation. Enumerating the fruits of inculturation in African Churches, the ‘Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa’ (AMECEA) states: 1) “A more joyous participation in the Holy Mass. 2) The laity becoming more involved in Church affairs in parish level…” (See IMBISA Study Document 1993:57). The active participation of the faithful helps them to have a new understanding of the Eucharist, a new way of celebration and a new meaning of community gathering as a family. These are the outcomes of inculturation where the culture of the people is allowed to speak through its symbols.

By enjoining the people of God to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist, the council admonishes the Catholics to sanctify the world, wherever they are found, with the fruits of the Eucharist. This idea is well brought out in Lumen Gentium in these words: “In the celebration of the Eucharist, these [fruits] may most fittingly be offered to the Father along with the body of the Lord. And so, worshipping everywhere by their holy actions, the laity consecrate the world itself to God” (L.G. No. 34). Power (1995:263) is right to conclude: “[Vatican II] placed the Tridentine emphasis on Christ’s presence in the Eucharistic species in the context of his presence in the assembly, in the world and in the minister.” Joining together to celebrate the memorial of Jesus in the context of the Eucharist, and in the spirit of Vatican II, the Eucharist becomes really and truly a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity and a Paschal banquet.
The council’s emphasis on the Eucharist as a sign of unity is another way of encouraging inculturation because inculturation fosters unity. Since we are talking about Eucharistic inculturation, the importance of unity among Catholics themselves and the other Christian Churches is an imperative. By portraying the Eucharist as a sign of unity, Vatican II envisages unity as an important tool for the promotion of inculturation especially in Africa, where, as demonstrated in chapter three, some Christian Churches sowed the seeds of discord among children of the same parents during the Western Missionary era.

6.6.2 Vatican II: Vehicle for the Promotion of Inculturation

Vatican II played a role in bringing about new insight about the culture of the people as well as the recognition of peoples’ cultures that are different from European culture. It also gave some specific instructions to its future missionaries on how to respect and handle peoples’ cultures. A good picture of the mentality of European missionaries before the Second Vatican Council is vividly described in this passage by Butler (1981:178), a European himself:

The missionary efforts of the early centuries at length led to the establishment of the Churches as one official religion of Europe… when Hilaire Biloc could coin his famous and regrettable dictum, ‘the faith is Europe and Europe is the faith.’ One result of this was, of course, that the gospel, whose origins were outside Europe, itself became deeply intertwined with Europeanism that Europe and the faith were, for many of us, practically indistinguishable, and the recent ‘secularization’ of European culture was seen as an unnatural betrayal of the very soul of Europe.

It was evident that faith as preached and practiced before the Second Vatican Council was identical with European culture and the Western missionaries went to the missions with the same mentality and impression. Regrettably, the problem we face now where Christianity has not succeeded to be deeply rooted in African culture, for example, is the result of the imposition of European culture on African Christians in the pretext of evangelization. In his analysis of the decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity (Ad Gentes Divinitus), Butler (1981:179-80) remarks:
Whereas the Christianity taken to ‘heathen’ countries by modern missionaries was usually heavily marked with the national or European culture of the missionaries, the Decree points out that the secular culture integument of Christianity is not part of its unchanging religious meaning, and that when it moves into a new culture it must willingly divest itself of the culture it brought with it and express itself in the culture it finds in its new situation. This process has been named indigenization, acculturation, or inculturalization.

Though Vatican II placed much emphasis on the importance of culture and the need to incarnate the Gospel into the culture of the receiving host, it did not use the word inculturation in all its documents. The interpretation and the application of the council’s teaching on culture is what Butler calls ‘indigenization, acculturation, or inculturalization.’ Shorter (1997:194) expresses a similar sentiment thus: “The Second Vatican Council, in its liturgical constitution, only recommended acculturation in exceptional circumstances.” The passage that incorporates our two themes—the Eucharist and inculturation—though indirectly, is Ad Gentes Divinitus, which states:

Through preaching and celebration of the sacraments, of which the Holy Eucharist is the center and summit, missionary activity makes Christ present, he who is the author of salvation… So whatever goodness is found in the minds and hearts of men [women], or in the particular customs and cultures of peoples, far from being lost is purified, raised to a higher level and reaches its perfection, for the glory of God… (Ad Gentes No. 9).

From the above it can be asserted that no previous council, or individual scholars have spoken as positively in favor of culture as Vatican II has done. Because of this important change from Vatican II in relation to culture, the whole council can be regarded as a vehicle for the promotion of inculturation. It may not be an exaggeration to say that Vatican II is the first move the Church has made to produce documents that concretely encourage inculturation. This is understandable because just as the other councils in the past had serious problems that occupied them, the Church of the modern age, guided by Vatican II, faces its own problems, one of which is cultural imposition by the Western missionaries. Another declaration of Vatican II that enables us to affirm that the Council is a vehicle for the promotion of inculturation is found in the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes No. 58).

Nevertheless, the Church has been sent to all ages and nations and, therefore, is not tied exclusively and indissolubly to any race or nation, to any one particular way of life, or to any customary practices, ancient or modern. The Church is faithful to its traditions and is
at the same time conscious of its universal mission, it can enter into communion with
different forms of culture, thereby enriching both itself and the cultures themselves.

The acceptance of the fact that cultures enrich the Gospel, and the Gospel enriches and
transforms cultures, is a bold step by Vatican II. This is also a landmark in the history of
the Church. The interaction between the Gospel and culture, and the possible outcome of
this interaction, is similar to what Arrupe calls ‘a principle that animates, directs and
unifies culture, transforming it and making it so as to bring about a new creation’. Though Vatican II did not use the word inculturation, its teachings and emphases on
culture and its initiative on the new method of missionary activity signal the promotion of
inculturation as well as ushering in positive signs for the realization of inculturation.

It is proper, therefore, to affirm that the effort of Vatican II to recognize and encourage
respect for other cultures has a fruitful outcome, namely the use of the vernacular in the
celebration of the Eucharist. The use of the vernacular with its accompanying local
musical instruments has brought about lively Eucharistic celebrations especially in
Africa. In fact, it is because Vatican II recognized and approved the use of the vernacular
that we in Mutare, for example, are talking about the importance of ‘inculturation. I still
maintain that Vatican II has played a significant role as a vehicle for the promotion of
inculturation. Recognizing the importance of unity in the world and its significance to the
Eucharist, in particular, Vatican II also committed itself to the promotion of ecumenism,
which will not be examined in this chapter.

6.7 Conclusion
Christ’s command to his first apostles was not only a powerful statement, it was also an
effective command for application when he said:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I
commanded you. And remember, I am with you always to the end of the ages (Mt. 28:19-
20).

This injunction has brought about what we call the missionary activity of the Church
which started in Jerusalem with a few people, called the apostles, and has continued to
spread till today, even here in Zimbabwe and in our diocese, Mutare, in particular. This chapter has enabled us to trace the development of the Church’s teachings on the Eucharist from the early Church till our present time. We speak about the Church’s teachings on the Eucharist because they are the authentic doctrines of the Church, which traditions have preserved, and which have been passed on from generation to generation. The Eucharistic life of the early Church was our primary source of information, from where the Eucharistic prayers, documents and written works of some Fathers were considered and examined. The Eucharistic prayers of the early Church made references to Jewish culture in which was committed reverence to the departed ones—a practice that is now known as the ‘invocation of ancestors or ancestral veneration’. In order to promote Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare, there is need for Eucharistic prayers to be adapted to Shona culture where the invocation of ancestors will occupy a prominent place.

I examined an early document called ‘The Didache’, rightly described by LaVerdiere (1996:128) as “a treasure trove of early Christian traditions, sayings, instructions and prayers...” The Didache, as an ancient document, enabled us to examine how the Eucharist was taught and celebrated. It was discovered that the ‘Didache’ had direct link with the traditional meal prayers that were embedded in Jewish culture. In other words, inculturation is indirectly implied in the teachings of the ‘Didache.’ I examined also the writings of some early Fathers like Justin, Hippolytus, Ambrose and Augustine of Hippo to see what they taught and how their teachings and methods could help us at our present time, especially in our effort to inculturate the Eucharist. The effectiveness of the contributions of these Fathers of the Early Church is still felt in the Church of our present time. Hence, Christians at this modern period refer to them from time to time. They deserve all respect given to them because of their contributions. While Justin emphasized local language and peoples’ participation at Mass, Ambrose promoted ‘local liturgy’ and Augustine called attention to the symbolic nature of the Eucharist. These contributions from the Fathers of the Church play an important role in the promotion of inculturation in our time.
The medieval period raised up an intelligent scholar, Thomas Aquinas, who was widely quoted during his time. It was during the medieval period that many abuses crept into the Church. The reactions to these abuses brought about the Reformation, which was initiated by individual Reformers such as Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, among others. During the Reformation period, the Reformers viewed sacrifice and real presence differently, but unanimously rejected transubstantiation. The Council of Trent made pronouncements to counteract the Reformers’ teachings on those disputed topics. With time, the gap widened between the Catholic Church and the Reformers now branded as ‘Protestants’. Consequently, many different churches emerged with different orientations and teachings on the Eucharist. These denominations started to celebrate the Eucharist differently, according to their reformist traditions.

Since the patristic and medieval were preoccupied with the problems of their times, they paid little attention to culture—our point of departure in terms of inculturation. In other words, inculturation was only indirectly applied during the patristic period. During the medieval period, where Latin dominated and participation was almost non-existent, it became a challenge for inculturation to be manifested in some ways, such as the use of the vernacular and active participation, which were earnestly encouraged.

Aware of the need for a ‘new missionary approach’ in evangelization, Vatican II came in to emphasize the importance of reconciliation and unity by preaching ecumenism. It also brought in a new understanding of culture and initiated a new approach to missionary activities in relation to culture. Efforts are still being made through the various commissions formed under the umbrella of ecumenism to bridge the gap between the Catholic Church and the other denominations. This movement is very important because the Eucharist, which was meant to be our source of unity, can no longer be the center of our divisions. This is a challenge to all Christians of the twenty first century. The desired unity must not only be preached but also practiced. One possible way to bring about the realization of unity among Christians is by making use of some cultural values that bind people together. For example, our extended family system with its emphasis on solidarity.
can be of great help for the promotion of unity as well as the effort to inculturate the Eucharist in Mutare diocese.

We can conclude that while the Church’s teachings on the Eucharist before Vatican II were preparatory stages in relation to inculturation, it is the teaching of Vatican II that is much more relevant to inculturation because it not only brought about awareness of the importance of culture, but it also encouraged active participation in the Eucharistic celebration. In all the teachings examined in this chapter, inculturation was not mentioned or directly intended, even in the Second Vatican Council where culture was discussed.

This chapter has, consequently, helped us to understand the Church’s teaching on the Eucharist. The discussion on culture in the chapter prepares us for the discussion on the implementation of inculturation in chapter nine. The next chapter examines all the other aspects of the Eucharist in order to appreciate the effort the Church is making to bring the understanding of the Eucharist down to the remotest part of the world—with emphasis on the grass roots—an attempt emphasized in inculturation. Hence we can talk of the inculturation of the Eucharist in the Catholic diocese of Mutare.
CHAPTER 7

DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF THE EUCHARIST

7.1 Introduction

The Catholic Church sees the Eucharist as an important sacrament in the life of the Church and its members. The notion of the Eucharist as an important sacrament in the Catholic Church has been taught since the origins of the Church to our present time. In examining the Church’s teaching on the Eucharist down the ages in chapter six, references were made to some aspects of the Eucharist such as thanksgiving and sacrifice without discussing them because the aim was to discover whether these teachings on the Eucharist had any relevance to inculturation. The various aspects of the Eucharist mentioned in chapter six will be examined and discussed in chapter seven in relation to inculturation.

The Official Catechetical Text (1999:49) states that the Eucharist “presents a multitude of aspects and therefore has been designated by many names.” One of the names, the Mass, will be used more often than the rest in this chapter, especially when we talk about the sacrifice of the Mass. On the other hand, attention will be given to the various aspects of the Eucharist in relation to inculturation. The importance of the Eucharistic meal will be further highlighted. I intend to examine also the important roles which the inculturated Eucharist plays in the life of the Church and her members. The words of Phypers & Bridge (1981:14) are suitable in this regard and I quote them verbatim as they are used in his text:

With the exception of the Quakers and the Salvation Army, all Christians everywhere, from Orthodox to Pentecostals, from Roman Catholics to Plymouth Brethren, and from the burgeoning denominations of the Third World to the Independent churches and house groups of the West, celebrate that Eucharist in one form or another. For many, the Eucharist is integral to their life, being almost the only way in which they ever worship God. For many more, it is profoundly important and its regular celebration is the mark of their ongoing discipleship to Jesus Christ. For a few, it is peripheral but still part, even if only an occasional part, of their pattern of worship.
For the Catholic Church, Vatican II (see *Lumen Gentium* (LG) art. 11) tells us that “the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life.” Thus, the Eucharist is integral to the Catholic Church. That is, it is part and parcel of the Church. It is thus important that we must inculturate it, talk about it, explain it to our generation, write about it for the next generation to read and above all, to celebrate it so that it becomes part and parcel of our life and existence. It is necessary to emphasize this aspect of celebration with the following important advice from the Fathers of the Church in the Vatican II documents:

The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators. On the contrary, through a good understanding of the rites and prayers, they should take part in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing with devotion and full collaboration (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* No. 48).

In relation to celebration and participation at the Eucharist, it is important to add that the worshipping communities, especially here in Mutare diocese, must not only be conscious of what they are celebrating; they must also be enthusiastic and convinced in their actions because they are celebrating life. When Catholics celebrate the Eucharist, they celebrate life because in John 6:51 Christ said: “I am the living bread that came down from Heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh.” Christ is categorical in John 6:53 when he insists: “Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.” Mindful of this injunction, this chapter aims at demonstrating the important role that the Eucharist plays in the lives of Catholics. It also discusses those aspects of the Eucharist that enable us to appreciate and promote inculturation, as will later be illustrated in chapters eight and nine.

*(Photo: bread of life)*
The meanings and significance of Eucharistic terms, such as thanksgiving, sacrifice, memorial and others, will be investigated and their relation to inculturation explored. I will also devote some time to discussing some of the important roles that the inculturated Eucharist can play in the Church and in our society. In examining these various aspects of the Eucharist, I begin with thanksgiving, which is an essential aspect of the Shona cultural way of life especially among the Catholics in Mutare diocese.

7.2 Eucharist as Thanksgiving

The first aspect of the Eucharist to be discussed in this section is ‘thanksgiving.’ In order to place the discussion in proper context, I begin by examining a few African proverbs that have some lessons on thanksgiving. I shall also look briefly at the Jewish and NT understanding of thanksgiving before proceeding to elaborate on the Eucharist as thanksgiving, which has already been lightly touched upon in the preceding chapter.

Africans have many ways of expressing their gratefulness through the use of proverbs. In Nigeria, the Ibo proverb says: “Ekelee onye akidi, ya agwota ozo” (Ogbalu, 1965:125). This means, if you thank a person who brought porridge beans, that person will bring more. Shona language has two related proverbs to illustrate the importance of thankfulness. In Shona it is said: “Tenda muchero ugowisa”, that is, “Be grateful (to the tree) so that it may yield more fruits”. Secondly, “Kuombera/Kukumbira zvichauya mangwana” that is, “To clap hands is to ask for more tomorrow” (Hamutyinei & Plangger 1987:67-68). Healey & Sybertz tell us another Sukuma proverb that says: “Thanks—you give us legs, you provide shoes for us” (1996:260). Giving a literary meaning of the proverb, Healey & Sybertz (1996:260) explain: “It is as though the visitor says to the host or hostess, you have cooked food which will give us strength and energy to travel.” These proverbs illustrate the importance which Africans in general, and Shona speaking people in particular, attach to gratitude and thankfulness.
Concerning thanksgiving in the early Church, it is also instructive to examine thanksgiving in the Jewish culture in order to gain a better understanding of it in different cultures. Horton (1993:19) provides a vivid presentation of the place of thanksgiving in Jewish culture and understanding when he writes: “Thanksgiving had a central place in Jewish piety, responding to the sense of triumphant and adoring gratitude experienced in the divine creation and in human history.” To a larger degree, we look at the Jewish Passover as the mainstream of thanksgiving among the Jews. Deiss (1986:51) captures this idea well when he remarks: “To celebrate the Passover was, first of all, to give thanks for the marvels of creation.” That is, the Jews were full of thanksgiving when God saved them in Egypt and brought them miraculously out of the land of slavery. In the passages we have cited and referred to, some were used to express “blessing” while the others were used to express “thankfulness.” Putting these two expressions together, Deiss (1986:47) observes: “In the Old Testament, eulogy corresponds rather to “blessing” (berakhah), whereas Eucharist corresponds to “thanksgiving” (todah). Thanksgiving, therefore, has a significant place in the Jewish culture. It is not a surprise that Jesus was full of gratitude to his Father throughout his lifetime. It is this gratitude expressed with a heart full of thanks that he taught his disciples, especially at table, each time they gathered for meals.

In the New Testament accounts Jesus frequently used the words thanks each time he broke the bread with his disciples. Deiss (1986:47) has a good synthesis of the narratives of Matthew and Mark, on the one hand, and Paul and Luke, on the other.

In the narrative of the Last Supper, the Matthew-Mark tradition uses the verb eulogize for the bread and the verb eucharistize for the wine, whereas the Antiochian Paul-Luke tradition uses only eucharistize. Yet both cases deal with the blessing as well as the thanksgiving Jesus addressed to his Father on taking the bread and the wine. By a convenient ellipsis, the name thanksgiving was eventually applied to the bread and the wine over which the prayer had been recited.

It becomes understandable, therefore, why the Eucharist is adopted from the Greek word eucharistein, which is translated to mean to give thanks. Jesus not only understood the significance of giving thanks, but he also made use of it.
Among the Fathers of the Church, Justin used thanksgiving very well to describe how the Eucharist was celebrated at that early time. LaVerdiere (1996:174-5) suggests the gradual steps of using thanksgiving in the Eucharistic celebration as described by Justin in this order:

Taking (labon) the bread and the cup of water and wine, the president offers praise and glory to the Father of all, through the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit and offers lengthy thanksgiving… When the president completed the prayers and the thanksgiving (tas euchas kaien eucharistian) all the people present spoke their assent saying Amen… After the president’s prayer of thanksgiving and the prayer’s assent, they whom we call deacons (diakonoi) give to each of those present to partake (metalabein) of the Eucharisticized bread (apo tou eucharistethentos artou) and the wine and water, they bring [take] them to those not present.

From the illustrations given so far, Eucharist and thanksgiving are similar or almost the same. Deiss has a lengthy elaboration of how the Jewish thanksgiving corresponds to the Christian thanksgiving in this masterpiece:

To Israel’s thanksgiving for the Jewish Passover, Christians add thanksgiving for Jesus’ Passover, for his death, his resurrection and ascension… They offer thanks for the manna in the desert, but even more for the bread of God which gives life to the world (John 6:33): the feast of the desert merely foreshadowed ‘the wedding feast of the Lamb’ (Revelation 19:9)… They offer thanks for the springs of living water God unsealed in the steppes, but even more for ‘the spring welling up to eternal life’ (John 4:14) dug for them by faith in Jesus… They offer thanks for the covenant concluded on Sinai, but even more for the new covenant in Christ’s blood… In short, the Jewish Pasch celebrates the exodus of Israel. The Christian Pasch celebrates the exodus of Jesus. The Eucharist commemorates both at one and the same time (1986:60-1).

Deiss gives a balanced understanding of thanksgiving by placing it side by side with the Jewish and Christian perspectives and applications. Thus, Justin the Martyr was partly correct when he said: “He who presides gives thanks” (see Deiss 1986:65). He was partly correct because, in our present circumstance, while the presiding priest offers the sacrifice of thanksgiving, he does so with the members of the congregation whom he has the responsibility to motivate or encourage to be fully involved. For example, in our present Eucharistic celebration, immediately after the presentation of the gifts, the presiding priest engages the congregation in this dialogue:
P: The Lord be with you
C: And also with you
P: Lift up your hearts
C: We lift them up to the Lord
P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
C: It is right to give him thanks and praise (Weekday Missal 1979:1014).

After this dialogue between the priest and the congregation, the priest alone says the Eucharistic prayer. In the Eucharistic Prayer II the priest confirms the importance of giving thanks to God in these words: “Father, it is our duty and our salvation always and everywhere to give you thanks through your beloved Son, Jesus Christ…” (Weekday Missal 1979:1019). Considering the nature of our present day Eucharistic celebration, where thanksgiving plays a significant role, it is interesting to note the conclusions reached by both Horton and Deiss in their separate expositions. Emphasizing the place of thanksgiving at present, Horton (1993:48) concludes: “Thus, the title and the form, and the content of the Eucharistic Prayer of thanksgiving are seen to have even greater significance and relevance today than in the past, because it determines both the meaning of the Eucharist and the Christian response that is most appropriate.”

Deiss (1986:67) is more emphatic in his own conclusion when he asserts: “Not merely one facet of the Eucharistic mystery, thanksgiving is its very center. Without it, there is no Mass.” From these discussions, it is obvious that the Eucharist has a close relationship with thanksgiving. It is also important to observe that thanksgiving as described above, has both spiritual and cultural undertones that are amenable to inculturation. One major question that bothers this researcher is whether our people in the rural areas of Mutare Diocese really understand that the Eucharist they celebrate is thanksgiving. The understanding of the Eucharist as thanksgiving is important to the Shona people because it will bring them closer to their cultural understanding of thanksgiving. At the same time, it will help them not only to appreciate the significance of the Eucharist in their lives, but also to celebrate it meaningfully. This is what I intend to explore as this discussion progresses, especially in chapter nine.
It is appropriate, therefore, for the moment to say that thanksgiving, with its cultural undertones, can serve as a starting point in our effort to inculturate the Eucharist in Mutare because the Shona culture is replete with expressions on thanksgiving. Since the Eucharist is an important gift from Christ, Catholics in Mutare diocese always express their gratitude by clapping hands at different times during the celebration of the Mass. In other words, the effort to integrate the Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese into the Shona understanding of thanksgiving will make the Eucharistic celebration more meaningful and purposeful to our people. This integration requires more time and explanation. That is why every Catholic in the diocese must be involved in the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation because inculturation is a process.

7.3 Eucharist as Sacrifice

Another important aspect of the Eucharist in this chapter is that of ‘sacrifice.’ The aim of this section is to find out how sacrifice is related to the Eucharist in both the old and new testaments. The etymology of the word ‘sacrifice’—Latin, *sacrum facere*, which means “to make (something) sacred”-- is closely related to the English word “consecrate”, that is, to make sacred by dedicating someone or something to God. People normally prefer to talk about types of sacrifice rather than defining it. However, McKenzie (1966:754) gives us what he calls a descriptive definition and purpose of sacrifice in this pattern: “Sacrifice can be descriptively defined in general as a material oblation made to the deity by means of a consecration and consumption of the thing offered. The purpose of this oblation is to establish or maintain communication with the deity.” This definition may be accepted as a working definition of sacrifice in this discussion. Both McKenzie (1966) and Crockett (1989) agree that sacrifice is a universal phenomenon. Practically every religion has one form of sacrificial ritual or other. In this regard, McKenzie (1966:754) makes the following observation: “The rituals of sacrifice exhibit a basic similarity which is not due to mutual borrowing, the nature of the symbolism of sacrifice and of the ideas from which it arises are the result of the belief in the deity and the desire to worship him.”
What follows in this paragraph is a brief summary on how sacrifice is viewed outside Christianity with particular reference to African traditional religion. In African traditional religion, sacrifice occupies a prominent place. Mbiti (1969:58) describes sacrifice among African traditional religions thus: “Sacrifices…constitute one of the commonest acts of worship among African peoples; and examples of them are overwhelmingly many.” The following types of sacrifice are commonly used in Africa. Expiatory sacrifice serves to remove abomination. In other words, it is used for the cleansing of the society and its peoples. Propitiatory sacrifice is used to obtain freedom from whatever was troubling the worshipper. Petition sacrifice enables the worshipper to obtain favours from God and from the ancestors. Finally, thanksgiving sacrifice is a means of expressing gratitude to ancestors for every favour received. Thanksgiving sacrifice is offered joyfully. Items for these sacrifices include animals, cereals, fruits, wine, water and others. The worshippers and the items to be offered are very important. Mbiti (1969:61) thus mentions another important element in sacrifice among Africans: “As a rule, there are no sacrifices without prayers: sacrifices and offerings are silent responses and prayers are verbal responses.

Catholics in Mutare diocese could learn the following lessons from African traditional worshippers in order to enrich Eucharistic celebration, thereby promoting inculturation. African traditional worshippers have strong relationships with their ancestors, whom they do not want to offend. Arinze (1970:19) explains the conscious commitment not to offend ancestors thus: “Those who forget their fathers have no right to expect their protection when the tables are turned against them.” It is deemed appropriate, therefore, to include the ‘invocation of ancestors’—along with that of the saints—in the inculturated Eucharistic celebration in Mutare. During thanksgiving sacrifice, African traditional worshipers sacrifice joyfully. An inculturated Eucharistic celebration must be a joyful celebration in order to attract the participation of Catholics in Mutare diocese.

With this background on sacrifice in general, I proceed to examine sacrifice in the New Testament in order to discover not only its significance, but also determine the role it will play in the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese.
7.3.1 Sacrifice in the New Testament

The aim of this section is to examine the place of sacrifice in the New Testament (NT) and also to determine how its understanding can help to promote Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese. In order to achieve the above-mentioned aims, a closer review of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross as presented in the NT is necessary. The sacrifice on the cross primarily refers to the death of Jesus through which, according to the NT, He redeemed the world. McBrien (1966:821) presents the NT interpretation of Jesus’ death on the cross in these words: “Thus, the New Testament interprets the death of Jesus as an atoning death which establishes a new covenant in his blood and brings redemption to all.” That is, Jesus’ death is an atonement sacrifice. The Church re-enacts Jesus’ sacrifice at Mass—known as the Sacrifice of the Mass.

In order to explain the meaning of Jesus’ sacrifice at Mass, the *Official catechetical Text* (1999:80) has this to say: “The Sacrifice of the Mass is not only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving nor a simple commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished on the cross but also a propitiatory sacrifice.” As a proof that Jesus’ death on the cross is sacrificial, Jeremias (1966:222) comments:

Only the second, cultic meaning comes into question when Jesus speaks of his flesh and his blood. He is applying to Himself terms from the language of sacrifice, as is also the case with the principle… (‘poured out,’ Mark 14:24). Each of the two nouns presupposes a slaying that has separated flesh and blood. In other words: Jesus speaks of himself as a sacrifice.

Jeremias agrees with Mcbrien and the *Official Catechetical Text* that Jesus’ death on the cross is sacrificial. Both Matthew and the Letter to the Hebrews confirm that Jesus’ death on the cross is not only sacrificial, but it is also redemptive: it was for the remission of sins. Matthew 26:28 emphasizes this point thus: “For this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Hebrews 9:28 explains Jesus’ sacrifice as a redemptive work of salvation in these words:
“So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

The Encyclopedia of theology (1975:1492) gives a comprehensive summary of Jesus’ sacrifice in these lines:

That Jesus redeemed us is most explicitly attested in the NT [and] in the Letter to the Hebrews. Here its cultic sense is characterized as an expiatory sacrifice, as also appears from the description of the life and death of Christ as obedience to the Father and from the fact that Christ gave his life for the sins of men [and women].

Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross has two main lessons for Eucharistic inculturation. The two lessons are ‘selflessness and obedience to the Father.’ Furthermore, Christ’s sacrifice becomes meaningful to Shona Catholics because of the similarity between Shona sacrifice of expiation and Jesus sacrifice on the cross. As Jesus offered himself for the remission of sins, in the same way, Shona people offer a ‘bull,’ referred to by Gelfand (1959:80) as “gono remusha or the bull of the village.” With this similarity, the blending of Eucharistic sacrifice and Shona sacrifice could bring about an inculturated understanding of the Eucharist.

7.3.2 Sacrifice According to Vatican II

In order to conclude the discussion on the Eucharist as sacrifice, I now briefly turn to the pronouncement of Vatican II on the same topic. This pronouncement is immediately followed by a general synthesis of the entire discussion on Eucharistic sacrifice. In its document on the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacrosanctum Concilium 1966), the Council declares:

At the Last Supper, on the night he was sacrificed, our Savior instituted the Eucharistic sacrifice of his body and blood. This he did in order to perpetuate the sacrifice of the cross throughout the ages until he should come again, and so to entrust to his beloved spouse, the Church, a memorial of his death and resurrection: a sacrament of love, a sign of unity, a bond of charity, a paschal banquet in which Christ is consumed, the mind is filled with grace and a pledge of future glory is given to us (S.C. No.47).
This teaching of Vatican II confirms the understanding of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross as a Eucharistic sacrifice, entrusted to the Church as a memorial of his death and resurrection. Vatican II also sees Eucharistic sacrifice as a sacrament of love and a sign of unity—signs very necessary for inculturation. Furthermore, the Vatican II pronouncement lends support to the earlier teaching of Trent which states: “The sacrifice of the Mass is not only a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving nor a simple commemoration of the sacrifice accomplished on the cross but a propitiatory sacrifice (see the *Official Catechetical Text* 1999:80). This teaching by the Council of Trent finds an echo in the *Official Catechetical Text* (1999:80) which comments that: “It is with these words that the Council of Trent attests to the sacrificial value of the Eucharistic celebration.”

In as much as the two Councils, Trent and Vatican II, agree in their pronouncements on the sacrificial nature of the Eucharist, after a careful study of the scriptures and the Church’s tradition the Church endorses this teaching. The Eucharist as sacrifice is understood to be the same as the sacrifice of the cross, except that it is no longer offered in a bloody manner as in the latter. On the strength of Trent’s pronouncement, the *Official Catechetical Text* (1999:83) recalls: “There is one single and unique victim: he is the same who now makes his offering by way of the ministry of priests, the one who offered himself on the cross. Only the manner of offering differs.” The same *Official Catechetical Text* (1999:84-85) gives an extensive explanation of the difference between the sacrifice of the Mass and the sacrifice on the cross:

The sole difference between the two sacrifices consists in the ‘manner of offering.’ The sacrifice of the cross was a bloody immolation, while the Eucharistic sacrifice is of a ritual order and excludes any shedding of blood. Besides, the Eucharistic sacrifice has the distinctive element of an offering of the body and blood of Christ under the species of bread and wine which are sacrificial signs… On Calvary, the sacrifice which obtains the salvation of the world, was accomplished once and for all. That sacrifice is a historical event, which, inserted as it is in an altogether determinate circumstances, is no longer repeated as such. It will forever preserve a unique character. The sacramental sacrifice, by contrast, celebrated in reference to this unique and exceptional sacrifice in history, is destined to be repeated to foster the growth of the Church. It is therefore quite different from the sacrifice of the cross: and yet it is in relationship with it, and depends entirely on it since the victim is the same and he who offers it is the same.
In other words, Christ does not sacrifice himself here as he did on the cross. Instead, through the ministry of the priests, Christ is now sacrificed under the appearances of bread and wine.

This discussion has been confined to the Catholic teaching on the Eucharistic sacrifice, sometimes referred to as the sacrifice of the Mass. It is important to repeat that the Reformers rejected this notion of the Eucharist as sacrifice in the 16th century, and many Protestant theologians of our century still reject it. Yet there are a few exceptions among these theologians, who do accept the notion of the Eucharist as sacrifice. According to (Horton 1993:59), those who reject the Catholic teaching on this subject do so on the ground that “it implies a repetition of Christ’s sacrifice at each celebration of the Holy Communion, and this denies the unique once-for-allness of the crucifixion on Calvary, so strongly emphasized in Hebrew 9:28.”

Horton (1993:50-51) mentions some names of those Protestants who accept the view of the Eucharist as sacrifice. Included among them are Max Thurian, a Reformed Church Liturgist, and Regin Prenter, an eminent Lutheran Professor. These two scholars have almost the same reason, which they express slightly differently. For Thurian, “the Eucharist is the sacramental presence of the sacrifice of the cross” (1983:50). For his part, Prenter affirms: “We must insist, not only that Eucharist is a true sacrifice, but even that it is the eternal presence of the sacrifice of Calvary in the Church” (1993:51). That is, there is a relationship between the sacrifice on the cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist, though the latter is in the form of bread and wine. Here is the core of the Eucharistic celebration, which is to be inculculturated for the growth of the Church in Mutare diocese. In other words, through inculcuration a better understanding of the relationship between culture and Christianity as reflected in the Eucharistic sacrifice comes out clearly. That is, Catholics in Mutare diocese will understand better the relationship between the sacrifice on the cross and the sacrifice of the Eucharist when the latter is well blended and integrated into Shona culture.
7.4 Eucharist as Memorial

The Eucharistic memorial, as already seen in the preceding account, has its origin at the Last Supper event. Hence, Crichton (1976:62) says: “Christ instituted the memorial of his death and resurrection at the Last Supper.” The understanding of the Eucharistic memorial in the context of the Last supper is clearly stated by McCormick (1952:78) as he elaborately explains:

Jesus sacramentally gave the disciples a part of his obedience unto death. This meant for them … God’s gift of salvation—salvation in union with Christ. At the Lord’s Supper this gift is again offered to men [women], and, as the initial celebration, they are to receive it faithfully. In grateful devotion to Christ, they are to accept it freely by eating and drinking the elements, which he causes effectually to signify that gift. In other words, what was done at the Last Supper, other than the new covenant’s formal inauguration, is to be repeated over and again in the Church’s Eucharistic worship.

McCormick underlines the importance of obedience, which the disciples of Christ are obliged to observe. In other words, the Last Supper has to be perpetuated in obedience to Christ’s command or injunction. The Eucharistic celebration offers this opportunity to re-enact the Last Supper event. In the celebration of the Eucharist, therefore, we always remember the death and resurrection of Christ. It is interesting to note that in the four Eucharistic prayers of the Catholic Church, the memorial is expressly recalled and stressed. For example, in our Weekday Missal (1979:1015-1029) the first Eucharistic prayer reads:

Father, we celebrate the memory of Christ, your Son. We, your people and your ministers, recall his passion, his resurrection from the dead, and his ascension into glory…

In the second Eucharistic prayer, it reads:

In memory of his death and resurrection, we offer you, Father, this life-giving bread, this saving cup. We thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

The third Eucharistic prayer renders the formula thus:

Father, calling to mind the death your Son endured for our salvation, his glorious resurrection and ascension into heaven, and ready to greet him when he comes again, we offer you in thanksgiving his holy living sacrifice…

Finally, the fourth Eucharistic prayer has this version:

Father, we now celebrate the memorial of our redemption. We recall Christ’s death, his descent among the dead, his resurrection, and his ascension to your right hand; and
looking forward to his coming in glory, we offer you his body and blood, the acceptable sacrifice.

From the four Eucharistic prayers of the Catholic Church, we can agree with Paul when he implies that the eating and drinking of bread and wine, in the Eucharistic ceremony, are, in fact, a proclamation of the death and resurrection of Christ the Lord. Seen as this redeeming work of Christ, Alonso (1988:99) rightly observes: “The Eucharist is a pleasing remembrance linked with esteem for the one who saved our life.”

Certainly, the memory of any special event is remarkably brought to life in the form of a lively festive celebration. Hence the expression, “Do this in memory of me,” makes good sense to Catholics and will do so in Mutare when they celebrate an inculturated Eucharist daily. In this way the understanding of memorial will play an important role in the inculturation of the Eucharist. The significance of the redeeming work of Christ and its impact on the celebrating community is well described by Crichton thus: “Now, after Calvary and the resurrection, the Eucharist was the ‘memorial’ (anamnesis) that made the power of the whole redeeming work of Christ present to the community.”

For The Official Catechetical Text (1999:34), “Do this in memory of me, clearly indicates what must be done in order for the memory of Christ to be actualized as he willed.” In other words, Jesus not only expected human beings living after him to remember him, but he also wished to make the Eucharist a memorial. In line with making the Eucharist a memorial, Thurian (1983:14) adds this slight remark: “And so, do this as a memorial of me really means, do this, so that my sacrifice may be present among you and my Father may remember me in your favor.” Bearing in mind the forgetful character of human beings, Benoit (1965:82) strongly observes: “The disciples would not have dared to repeat this action, to which they attached such great importance, if they had not received express instructions from their master to do so.” The relevance of Jesus’ command to his disciples and subsequently to us, his followers, is well articulated by Alonso (1988:101):
Every moment of the life of Christ speaks to us, challenges us and demands of us a conformity; that is a shared ‘common form.’ If the contrary were true, the memory would be a mockery. The memory is the principle and guarantee of our identity; energetic active memory is the principle of identification. We are of Christ and we must be ever more like Christ. His memory urges us on, and this is not only as individuals, but [also] as a community.

The whole Last Supper event, for which the Eucharistic memorial stands, is schematically illustrated by Power in this sketch:

The event is brought to narrative. The narrative is brought to blessing. The blessing transforms the bread and wine into the body and blood. The body and blood is received as a gift from Christ, communion in Christ’s life and a communion in the present event in history. The entire action, based as it is on narrative remembrance, looks forward to the fulfillment of the covenantal promises and puts all historical experiences into this horizon (1995:51).

Power’s Schematic approach summarizes our discussion of the Eucharistic memorial. However, with much stress on the Passover event, Clark (2000:120) concludes:

Just as the Passover meal, celebrated year after year, ‘proclaimed’ the Lord’s deliverance of his old covenant people, so the Eucharist is celebrated to proclaim the deliverance of his new covenant people. Both proclaimed what God did, so that the participants might renew their appreciation of what came from it, and pray that that blessing might be increased.

I have thus far in this discussion stressed the importance of celebrating the memorial of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. It is a memorial in the sense that the Church on earth continues to recall and re-enact Jesus’ command in her daily celebrations of the Holy Mass: “Do this in memory of me”. The four Eucharistic prayers cited earlier indicate that the Church continues to follow the instruction and command of her master. While the Church celebrates this memorial, she has her eyes also on the eschatological fulfillment of this celebration. Hence the fourth Eucharistic prayer brings this out when it states: “We recall Christ’s death, his descent among the dead, his resurrection and his ascension to your right hand; and looking forward to his coming in glory…”
As the Jews in the Old Testament remembered the Passover and celebrated it with enthusiasm, bearing in mind its significance in their history, in the same way the understanding of the Eucharist as memorial must also help the people of Zimbabwe to recall their cultural roots so as to celebrate it with enthusiasm and conviction in Mutare. The Eucharistic celebration that makes provision for the ‘invocation of ancestors’ offers Catholics in Mutare diocese an opportunity to remember their ancestors and also to ask for their intercessions. Furthermore, the Eucharistic celebrations on the occasions of the arrival of a new baby, praying for rain and harvest thanksgiving in Mutare diocese are some of those cultural roots that are significant in the lives of the people as Catholics. These events must be remembered and celebrated with joy and thanksgiving.

### 7.5 Eucharist as Symbol

In discussing the Eucharist as symbol, it will be helpful to begin by recalling the definition of a symbol given by Dhavamony (1997:52): “A symbol is something regarded by general consent as naturally typifying or representing or recalling something by possession of analogous qualities or by association in fact or thought.” The stress is on the general consent by the people to the meaning of a particular symbol. The need to have a consensus or agreement on the meaning of a given symbol is important in order to avoid confusions that are likely to abound when there are loopholes in different interpretations. I have so far established that what we now know as the Eucharist is believed to have started with Jesus’ action at the Last Supper. LaVerdiere’s identification of Jesus’ actions at the Last Supper as recorded by Mark, corresponds well with our heading, ‘Eucharist as Symbol.’ In this identification, LaVerdiere (1996:58) writes:

> Mark’s story of the Eucharist reaches its second climax in the passion-resurrection (14:1-16:18) at Jesus’ Last Supper with the twelve (14:17-26). The first part of the Gospel emphasized the symbol and theme of bread, the breaking of the bread and eating. The second part emphasizes the symbol and theme of the cup and drinking the cup.

In this passage, LaVerdiere argues that Mark rightly identifies the importance of participation in both actions of eating the bread and drinking the cup. This means, for example, that by drinking the cup we symbolically participate in Jesus’ self-offering of
himself without reservation. Power (1995:294) highlights the importance of this participation as well as the symbolism of this eating and drinking in this manner: “The symbolism of eating and drinking, or of nourishment, has always served to express the intimacy of communion with Christ that the sacrament offers.” This intimacy is what we refer to as the love between Christ and his apostles. Thus, it can be said that the Eucharist is a symbol of love. Christ expressed this love by giving himself symbolically through a meal. That is, he gave himself to his cherished apostles and his subsequent followers in the form of food and drink. By this kind of action, Christ gave the Eucharistic food and drink—bread and wine—a sacramental character as symbols of his intimate love for his apostles and future followers. In the same way, those who eat and drink the body and blood of Christ not only express their own love, but also their faith in him who said “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I in that person” (Jn.6:56). Each time Christians participate in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, according to the Catholic faith, they re-live symbolically this love, which Christ has for them and which led to his death and resurrection.

In the effort to inculturate the Eucharist in the diocese of Mutare, it is necessary to explore and use those cultural symbols that speak meaningfully to the hearts of Zimbabweans. It is those symbolic actions in Shona culture that speak of peace, unity, hospitality and selflessness that are of great help in the inculturation of the Eucharist. It is important to note and also to emphasize the meal aspect that characterizes the three aspects of the Eucharist—thanksgiving, sacrifice and memorial as well as their relationship to inculturation. They are related to inculturation because they are deeply rooted in the culture of any given society—be it Jewish, Shona or any other.

Referring to the importance of symbolism of the meal in the African context, as espoused by Mutiso-Mbinda, Healey and Sybertz (1996:254) note.

A meal is perhaps the most basic and most ancient symbol of friendship, love and unity. Food and drink taken in common are obvious signs that life is shared. In our [African] context, it is unusual for people to eat alone. Only a witch or wizard would do that. A meal is always a communal affair. The family normally eats together. Eating together is a sign of being accepted to share life and equality (see Healey and Sybertz).
Most of the cultural values Mu tiso-Mbinda outlined as characteristics of African culture are also applicable to Shona culture. Three Shona proverbs explain the significance of cultural values of togetherness, communal sharing and hospitality. They are: *kubatana isimba* (togetherness is strength) *chikapfu chinodywa navanhu vakawanda chinonaka* (food eaten together is more appetizing and satisfying) *doro remunyimi rinowawa* (beer taken by a stingy person alone is sour).

In terms of eating, Shona culture encourages and promotes togetherness, communal sharing and hospitality. The essence of these cultural values is highly esteemed to the extent that it is taught to children from infancy. These Shona cultural values are important elements that the Catholic Church in Mutare can make use of in the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation. In other words, the Eucharistic celebration must be integrated into these Shona cultural values.

### 7.6 Eucharist as a Communal and Joyful Meal of Unity

As a theological concept the Eucharist is a celebration that brings people together to eat and drink in accordance with Jesus’ command. This section examines how the Eucharist fulfills the role of a communal meal that brings joy and unity. Jesus, being a child of his own time and culture, was also aware of the importance of a meal in a communal feast. In the Jewish culture and religion meals play a fundamentally important role. Hence, the *Official Catechetical Text* (1999:99) remarks: “In Jewish religion, the role of the meal in relation with God was not ignored.” The immediate reference would be the ceremonial meal connected with the sealing of a covenant, especially the meal that concluded the establishment of the old covenant in Exodus 24.

Referring to the importance of a meal in general and to the Last Supper meal in particular, McBrien (1966:829) attests: “The meal which is the object of these reports was only the last in a long series of daily meals which Jesus shared with his disciples. In the Oriental world of his day, a shared meal was always a sign of peace, trust and communality.” The communal aspect of the Eucharist is very much in line with African
culture. Thus, an African proverb says, “Community is strength.” The basic principle, therefore, is that since the community is the custodian of the individual, he or she must go where the community is. A meal always presupposes an invitation. A typical invitation is clearly brought out in Isaiah 55:1-2:

All you who are thirsty come to the water; all you who have no money come. Yes without money and at no cost, come, buy and drink wine and milk. Why spend money on what is not food and labor for what does not satisfy? Listen to me and you will eat well; you will enjoy the richest of food.

In the context of the Gospel narratives, Jesus is the host who invites his disciples to a meal. Seen from Christ’s side as the host inviting his disciples, this gathering for a meal, especially at the Last Supper, explains Jesus’ mission—a deep sense of mercy and willingness to save his people. On the part of his disciples, those especially who have followed him consistently and listened to his word are invited to the table. In this way, a strong mutual trust and community grows. The effect of this gathering and the importance of the communal aspect of the Eucharist are well articulated by Liesting (1968:38) in this affirmation:

It is a real being together, a living together, a feeling together, a reviving of memories together (memorial celebration), etc… They reach their full goal, if by this the ties of friendship are strengthened, for in eating and drinking—human conditions of living—one knows himself [herself] to be related in the search for life.

The Eucharist is also characterized by a powerful symbolic element of unity. Fernandez (2001:118) expresses this unity that characterizes the Eucharist in this powerful synthesis:

Just as the bread is made from several grains of wheat, all crushed and mixed together, each losing its identity, as it were, in order to form the one bread, so individual Christians who celebrate the Eucharist mingle to form but one Body in Christ and with Christ. The wine too brings out this same significance: it is obtained when several grapes have been crushed, fusing their substance into one single cup of wine.

In other words, the bread we eat and the wine we drink symbolically unite us with Christ and with one another, who partake of this food and drink. St. Paul insists on the necessity of this unity at the Lord’s Supper. As he instructs the Corinthians he reiterates: “The
bread that we break, is it not a communion with the body of Christ? The bread is one, and so we, though many, form one body, sharing the one bread” (1Cor.10:16b-17). The plural form “we” used by Paul, confirms that the Holy Eucharist is a communal event and meal. Therefore, this communal sharing should fill us with joy because of the fellowship and the future hope it creates among the participants. Horton (1993:12) explains why the Eucharist must be a joyful celebration in this statement: “It is Easter laughter because God’s last word is not condemnation, suffering, or death, but the joy of resurrection and eternal life with all the friends of God united in gratitude and praise, as dimly glimpsed in the service of Holy Communion.”

The Shona model of a communal meal exemplified in the extended family must be brought into play in our Eucharistic celebration so as to contribute to the inculturation of the Eucharist and make it more communal, more unifying and more enjoyable. All we have said so far is summarized in the Shona proverb that says: “Ukama hunozadziswa nokudya.” This means: ‘Relationship is fulfilled and enhanced in eating.’ Consequently, most important celebrations in Shona culture are concluded with eating. Thus, the inculturation of the Eucharist has a lot to benefit from Shona cultural values. In effect, it is important to emphasize that the resultant effect of a Eucharistic celebration must be abundant joy, exultation and jubilation. That is, we must celebrate like those who have hope that we have been liberated from selfishness, sectarian division and cultural intolerance.

7.7 Eucharist as a Liberating, Life-Giving Meal

As Jesus’ blood was shed in order to liberate the fallen human race, in the same way the Eucharist, which is His Body and Blood, liberates those who partake of it from their vices. The letter to the Colossians (Col. 2:13-14) explains how Christ has freed humanity from its sins and vices by dying on the Cross in these forceful words: “You were dead. You were in sin and uncircumcised at the same time. But God gave you life with Christ. He forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of our debts, those regulations which accused us. He did away with all that and nailed it to the cross.”
As a liberating and life-giving meal, the Eucharist has the capability of transforming our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. It has the ability to liberate us from such vices as envy, greed, jealousy, disunity, injustice, selfishness, oppression—especially oppression of the poor and the weak—eagerness for war, destruction of human life and nature, wickedness and many other kinds of immoral behavior that characterize our modern age. The Eucharist is able to achieve all these because Christ has nailed them to the cross. Clark (2000:152) has a very powerful way of putting across this liberating aspect of the Eucharist in this context:

Receiving the Eucharist changes us so that we can function in a better way, a way that is above the capabilities of our fallen nature. It helps us to become joyful in the Lord. It elevates us spiritually, raises us above ourselves, so that we can readily and worthily celebrate the goodness of the Lord. It is, in the words of an older prayer in the liturgy, ‘a sobering inebriation with the Holy Spirit.’

In 2 Corinthians 5:17, St Paul tells us that those in the Lord are new creatures. The old nature of sin, of vices and unworthiness, has passed. This newness in the Lord is as a result of his blood which he shed for us by dying on the Cross. In the Eucharist, we recall his death, his resurrection and his coming in glory. In the same way, with our participation in the Eucharist we are at the heart of the new covenant. The Eucharist not only makes us new, it also vivifies us by giving us strength and life. We must celebrate it with good dispositions as well as a willingness to be challenged by its demands.

Bernier (1981:81) describes a category of Catholics who have a better understanding of the Eucharistic celebration and participation thus:

Yet a group [of people] who are good and active participants see the Eucharist as God’s greatest gift to us. Born from the love of Christ as he offered his life for us, it is a testament of his grace and service. It is the greatest of the sacraments and the chief source of grace in the Church as in one’s personal life.

The liberating power of the Eucharist is effective because it is Christ who transforms those who receive his body and blood at Mass so as to make them new creatures. In order to implement inculturation effectively in Mutare diocese, it is important to make the
Eucharistic celebration more meaningful and interesting to enable Catholics to appreciate their culture, to participate in the Eucharistic celebration as well as in the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation

7.8 Conclusion

As the Eucharist is known by many names, in the same way, it is associated with many aspects characteristic of its nature and function. This chapter has tried to go through these aspects of the Eucharist and to see how they relate to inculturation. It was discovered that the Eucharist as thanksgiving was widely acknowledged and accepted by both the Catholics and the Protestants. Furthermore, Shona culture is replete with expressions of thanksgiving that are necessary for inculturation. There was a brief summary of sacrifice outside Christian tradition. The lessons Catholics could learn from African traditional worshipper were highlighted. Sacrifice in the New Testament was also examined.

The lessons of selflessness and Jesus’ obedience to his Father were identified as fundamental elements necessary for the promotion of inculturation. Vatican II it was noted, not only re-echoed Trent’s decision on the sacrifice of the Mass, but it also affirmed that the Eucharist is a sacrifice. The council went further to explain the relationship between the Eucharist as sacrifice and the sacrifice of the cross. The Eucharist as memorial was also discussed and the lessons from it were noted. It was also deemed necessary to discuss the Eucharist as symbol and its meal aspect for proper and indepth understanding. Further, the emphasis on the meal aspect of the Eucharistic was demonstrated in the three sections earmarked for it. While the section on the Eucharist as a communal joyful meal had emphasis on the unity the meal brings, the Eucharist as a liberating, life-giving meal demonstrated the power of the Eucharistic meal to liberate Christians who receive the body and blood of Christ from vices.

In conclusion, it is important to re-affirm that the Shona cultural values of togetherness, communal sharing and hospitality, in relation to the Eucharistic meal, are important elements in the inculturation of the Eucharist. The sharing at Communion by all will not
only re-assure all Catholics of their full membership, it will also enable them to have a sense of belonging, which motivates them to participate very actively for the growth of the Catholic Church in the diocese.
CHAPTER 8

TOWARD AN INCULTURATED EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION IN MUTARE DIOCESE

8.1 Introduction

Chapter seven examined the various aspects of the Eucharist in relation to inculturation. This was done in order to determine how their inculturation could help bring about a meaningful Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese. It is necessary, therefore, to examine in this chapter the various Eucharistic elements that have emerged in the previous discussions in order to determine how they can facilitate inculturation attempts in the diocese.

A remark made by Hearne, the then editor of African Ecclesial Review [AFER] at the celebration of the magazine’s hundredth publication series is appropriate for opening this chapter. Recalling the nature of the African Church in the year the AFER magazine was started, Hearne (1980:321) remarks:

The Church in Africa in 1959 was still largely a ‘Mission Church,’ with its liturgy celebrated in Latin and with the vast majority of its leading personnel coming from abroad. Things have changed quite drastically since then, and, looking around for a suitable theme for this 100th issue, we thought that there was no better way of expressing this change than by focusing on the whole question of what has been variously called ‘adaptation,’ ‘incarnation,’ ‘acculturation,’ ‘inculturation,’ and, finally ‘interculturation.’

This editorial comment is suitable in every aspect for the theme of this chapter. The editor skillfully highlights the essential components of what I intend to discuss in it. For example, he brings to the fore the nature of the Church in Africa in the past and alludes to the present, where he notes a remarkable change. He also refers to the liturgy in a broad sense, which I intend to explain in order to show how it relates to the Eucharist. The various terms associated with inculturation are clearly indicated. Such terms as adaptation, acculturation and incarnation have already been explained in chapter two.
The emphasis of this chapter is on the elements that constitute inculturation and occasions for their application. Its aim is to establish the necessity of these elements and also to show the importance of inculturating them in Mutare diocese. It must be noted that the discussion on the elements of inculturation includes those that are already integrated in the inculturation process in Mutare diocese and those which are yet to be integrated. I will review how they are applied in Mutare diocese in our present time as opposed to the time of the foreign missionaries. I must emphasize here that these elements of inculturation go beyond those forming part of the Sunday Eucharistic activities. They include, among others, those reflected in (1) two solemnities of the Church, (2) some joyful moments in peoples’ lives and, most importantly, (3) the roles of smaller groups in the Church.

If inculturation is dynamic, it is envisaged that it will address not only the religious problems Catholics face but also, without restriction and inhibition, some other human problems that Christians experience. Magesa (2004:172) warns against such restrictions when he advises: “What the African Church needs now is to grow into them [foundations of the faith] in maturity. This is possible only by taking seriously and accepting the process of inculturation. For those who must guide it, it is important to be conscious of its dynamic so that they do not hinder the work of the Spirit of God.” I consider the promotion of smaller groups as one of the necessary processes toward inculturation and this explains why I consider their discussion in this chapter very important. Besides, it is also a fact that what constitutes elements of inculturation in a particular locality may not be considered as such in another area. The discussion on liturgy can throw some light.

8.2 Liturgy and Inculturation

The words ‘liturgy’ and ‘liturgical inculturation’ will be important aspects of our discussion in this chapter. *Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia* (1991:596) gives the definition and components of the liturgy in these lines:

The liturgy is the Church’s public worship. It includes all the rites and ceremonies by which the Church expresses her worship of God. The celebrations of the liturgy are
actions involving not only the sacred ministers but also all the people concerned... First and foremost, the liturgy includes the celebration of the seven sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

The above definition indicates the relationship between the liturgy of the Church and the Eucharist. It also emphasizes the importance of those who celebrate the Eucharist, namely, the sacred ministers and the whole people of God. McBrien (1966:1064) brings out the real relationship between liturgy and the Eucharist when he explains: “In the West, liturgy has come to include not only the Eucharist, but also the other sacraments and the liturgy of the hours (the divine office).” This means that while liturgy is broader than the Eucharist, the latter gives context and meaning to the former. A well-conceived liturgical inculturation makes Eucharistic celebration meaningful. For Chupungco (1992:30),

Liturgical inculturation may be defined as the process of inserting the texts and rites of the liturgy into the framework of the local culture. As a result, the texts and rites assimilate the peoples’ thought, language, value, ritual, symbolic and artistic pattern. Liturgical inculturation is basically the assimilation of the liturgy of local cultural patterns.

From Chupungco’s definition, the aim is to make sure that liturgical celebration becomes part and parcel of the culture of the celebrating community. This is not just a replacement of the texts of the missionaries by mere translation into the local language. For the celebration to be fully part and parcel of the culture of the celebrating community, it must touch the lives of the people who are celebrating. In order to achieve the goal envisaged by Chupungco, McCabe (1986:8) outlines the procedure as well as the questions to be asked in order to gain proper direction:

Here we would seek out those ritual elements in the local culture which would express the same idea. As we then look at each sacrament at various aspects of liturgical ritual, the question to be asked is whether the symbols and/or gestures speak clearly to the people, or whether a better symbol and/or gesture should be substituted?
McCabe provides useful insights that will be helpful in determining the elements that constitute inculturation in this chapter. The attempt to find appropriate symbols for local people in their context is a process of inculturation. The aim is not just to adapt these elements to our liturgical celebrations but also to point out the difference they have made as opposed to the traditional celebration before Vatican II. The inculturation of the Eucharist does not end with the celebration of the liturgy on Sundays. Other sacraments that are celebrated in the context of the Eucharist, such as marriage and priestly ordination, are also to be inculturated. In the Catholic Church, for example, the institution of the Eucharist and that of the priesthood are commemorated on the same day—namely, on Holy Thursday. In the Catholic teaching this means that by instituting the Last Supper—the Eucharist—Jesus also instituted the priesthood for this and other ministries in the Church. Regarding marriage as a subject for inculturation, I would like to borrow the image presented by Fiorenza (see 1991:332) when he declares: “… [M]arriage is a symbol of a new community of life, one that images the origin of post-Easter, early Christian communities and one that anticipates the Christian eschatological hope of community.” It is not surprising, therefore, that Jesus, anticipating this eschatological union, compares the kingdom to a wedding banquet.

There are some important solemnities that touch the life and faith of Catholics. These solemnities, such as Christmas and Easter, are to be examined in order to highlight and explain the elements of inculturation they contain as they are celebrated in Mutare diocese. I intend also to examine smaller groups in the diocese, such as ‘vaparidzi vadiki’, ‘zvitazva vanAmai nevanAma’ in order to demonstrate how they promote inculturation. The emphasis on these smaller groups is on their participation in the Eucharistic celebration and in the promotion of inculturation in Mutare diocese as carriers of their culture. The immediate task is to situate the place (Mutare diocese) where the research is taking place.
8.3 Catholic Diocese of Mutare

It is pertinent to begin this section by looking at what the Vatican II says about a diocese.

According to *Christus Dominus* 1966, No 11,

A diocese is a section of the people of God entrusted to a bishop to be guided by him with the assistance of his clergy so that, loyal to its pastor and formed by him into one community in the Holy Spirit through the Gospel and the Eucharist, it constitutes one particular Church in which the one, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of Christ is truly present and alive.

Geographically, the Catholic diocese of Mutare is situated at the Eastern part of Zimbabwe in the Manicaland Province. Administratively, Mutare is one of the districts in the province. The others include: Buhera, Chimanimani, Chipinge, Makoni, Moats and Nyanga. The civil districts directly under the Catholic diocese of Mutare proper are Chimanimani, Chipinge, Mutasa and Nyanga. Structurally, Mutare diocese is made up of twenty-four parishes. The first and oldest of these parishes is called Triashill and the most recent is in the Headlands named Mount Carmel. (*See photos*)
The first mission that opened up the road that led to what we know today as the Catholic diocese of Mutare started in 1896 at Triashill. This ‘journey’, to the Eastern Highlands, was possible through the indefatigable work of the Trappist priests and brothers who came from Marian Hill, near Durban. Those at the forefront at that early stage were Fr. Hyacinth and brothers Nivard, Romualdo and Simon. From 1896, when the diocese started, till 1996, when it celebrated its centenary, the leadership in Mutare diocese has passed through several hands. For example, it has passed from the Trappists to the Jesuits, from the Jesuits to the Carmelites and from the Carmelites to the present local diocesan bishop.

As a background to the creation of Mutare diocese, the Catholic Directory (2000-2002:113) records:

The prefecture Apostolic of Mutare was erected on the 2nd of February 1953. It was entrusted to the care of the Carmelite Fathers of the Irish Province. The territory consists of parts divided from the vicariates of Salisbury (Harare) and Fort Victoria (Masvingo) and comprises the greater part of the administrative Province of Manicaland. On February 15 1957, the prefecture was raised to the status of [a] diocese.

A prefecture is an ecclesial administrative area which is not yet of the status of a diocese but under the jurisdiction of a prefect apostolic. Thus, the above territory, which was mapped out for Mutare diocese, is in line with specifications of the Vatican II which, under Christus Dominus (No 22), regulates inter alia: “Therefore as regards diocesan boundaries the Sacred Synod decrees that, in so far as the good of souls requires it, a prudent revision of diocesan boundaries be undertaken as soon as possible.” The first bishop of Mutare diocese was the late Donal Lamont. In 1982, Bishop Alexio Churu Muchabaiwa, the present resident local ordinary, succeeded Bishop Lamont. The auxiliary bishop and Vicar General of the Catholic diocese of Mutare is bishop Patrick Mumbure Mutume. While bishop Muchabaiwa resides in Drumfad, his cathedral—the Holy Trinity—is at the city center Mutare. Among the resident international religious congregations are the Spiritans, who came into Zimbabwe in 1984. The Spiritans have their headquarters in Fern Valley and work in six parishes in the diocese.
In summary, the Catholic diocese of Mutare has two bishops and about sixty-four priests, sixteen of whom are diocesan priests. There are about one hundred and thirteen professed women religious, twenty-two senior seminarians, eight hundred and nineteen catechists and many primary and secondary schools. There are twenty-four parishes and about one hundred and thirty thousand Catholics in Mutare diocese. The map below shows the areas where the parishes in the diocese are located. Map of Mutare Diocese.
8.4 Different aspects of Inculturation in Eucharistic Celebration

In chapter two, I defined inculturation and other terms related to it. There is need here to recall one or two of these definitions so as to keep the discussion properly focused. I start by examining and explaining the two dimensions of inculturation outlined by John Paul II (1995:164-165): “Inculturation includes two dimensions: on the one hand, it is the ultimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity and, on the other hand, the insertion of Christianity in the various human cultures.” Our main concern in this chapter is on the second dimension, which spells out the essence of inculturation—the ‘insertion’ or the ‘integration’ of Christianity or the Gospel message into Shona culture, for example. However, the first dimension is also important because it is the starting point towards inculturation. In effect, the two dimensions are ‘Christianization’ and ‘inculturation’ working together to bring about a deep-rooted Christianity in Zimbabwe.

Chupungco (1989:29,31) has a similar perception when he talks of liturgical inculturation and how the Church inculturates the liturgy. For the former, he maintains: “the texts and rites used in worship by the local church are so inserted in the framework of culture, that they absorb its thought, language, and ritual patterns.” Later he explains: “cultural elements were inserted into the liturgy, taking account of their nature and identity.” In the following lines, Chupungco (1982:85) explains the relationship between inculturation and Christianization thus: “Inculturation, properly done, is an ideal means of ‘Christianizing’ the entire culture, that is to say, of imbuing culture with the spirit of Christ and his Gospel.” Chupungco’s explanation, therefore, implies that both inculturation and Christianization are closely related. It is not our intention to place a strict demarcation between them. The two dimensions of Pope John Paul II have some implications.

The outcome of these two dimensions is what Crollius (1986:43) calls “…a force that animates, orients and innovates this culture so as to create a new unity and communion, not only within the culture in question but also as an enrichment of the Church universal.”
For Arrupe (1997:11), these two dimensions can be summarized as “a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and making it so as to bring about new creation.” In other words, there should be a continuous dialogue between ‘faith’ and ‘culture. Instrumentum Laboris (1993:43) points out the other side of this dialogue in these words: “Christianity becomes itself enriched when through inculturation it enters into dialogue with peoples and with their cultures.” This dialogue is important. As Shorter (1997:11) explains: “Culture, as we have seen, is a developing process, and there must be, therefore, a continuous dialogue between faith and culture.” In line with Christ’s incarnation into the Jewish culture, (see Waliggo et al 1986:12) has this to say about inculturation: “It is a continuous endeavour to make Christianity ‘feel at home’ in the cultures of each people.” In other words, it is the “the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context…” (See Shorter 1997:11).

The aspects of inculturation we are looking at here, in addition to ‘creating a new unity’ (Crollius), and ‘bringing about new creation’ (Arrupe), will also enable Mutare Catholics to integrate the Eucharistic celebration into Shona culture. This calls for broader inculturation of the Eucharist that is not limited only to Sunday activities. Some of the elements that constitute inculturation in the Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese include symbolic language, gestures, enthronement, singing and dancing, invocation of ancestors, among others. They become meaningful when they are integrated into ritual celebrations as determined by various rites. I intend to examine the two main parts of the Mass, namely, the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist to show how the application of the elements of inculturation described above differ from what was obtainable before the Vatican II era.

8.4.1 Introductory Rites

The introductory rites are the early activities of the Mass that form the parts preceding the liturgy of the word. They include: the procession and entrance hymn, greeting, penitential rite, the reciting or singing of the Gloria and the opening prayer. The rites we are interested in here are those prescribed for the celebration of the Eucharist according to the
Latin rite. *The General Instruction* (1974: No. 24) recognizes the place of introductory rites when it states: “The purpose of these rites is to make the assembled people a unified community and to prepare them properly to listen to God’s word and celebrate the Eucharist.” The congregation assembles as a unified community because all present acknowledge that they are children of God in one Christian family. In the African context, they belong to one ‘extended family.’ It is in the process of examining the activities that fall under the introductory rites that the inculturation that takes place emerges. I now examine how these elements constitute inculturation in Mutare diocese and briefly state how their application in Mutare differs from previous celebrations before the Vatican II liturgical reforms.

### 8.4.2 Entrance Procession: Singing, Dancing and Gestures

I begin by examining the entrance/procession, singing, dancing and celebratory gestures—activities that mark the beginning of the whole celebration. Before the Vatican II, when the chief celebrant and two altar servers faced away from the congregation toward the wall, the procession to the altar was done silently. Emminghaus (1978:105) describes this silent entry thus: “The priest emerges from the sacristy with those who are to perform various services during the Mass: reader, cantor, servers.” The entrance hymn was not emphasized. In other words, the lively kind of ceremony that fills the mind of every African worshipper with joy and great expectation was lacking. The “Gloria” was a popular Latin hymn sung during ‘High Mass.’ Though the congregation sang this popular melodious hymn, many Catholics did not understand its meaning because it was sung in Latin. In urban parishes, there were pianos or music organs that were foreign to Shona culture. There were no Shona instruments or dancing because the missionaries forbade not only the use of native drums, but they also regarded Shona and other (African) dance as unsacred; it was only good for social entertainment and was not to be allowed in the Church. Analyzing the various ways in which the Western missionaries, together with the colonial masters, suppressed African culture, Bujo 1992:45) comments:
The Ghanaian, Alex Quaison-Sackey writes: ‘Perhaps worse was the deliberate attempt to eradicate or destroy our cultural heritage. Since drumming, for example, was considered by the church to be a heathen practice, African Christians were at once cut off from the wellsprings of their culture—the rhythms of African music and dance… were regarded as inferior.’

For Bujo, those African customs which the missionaries considered ‘harmful to public order’, they asked the colonial government to do away with. Unfortunately, among them dancing and drumming were included. Before Vatican II, few gestures were observed during Mass. These included kissing the altar and an occasional extension of hands by the priest. In Mutare diocese, an inculturated Eucharist has given the procession into the Church more meaning, thereby making it livelier. Many people participate during the procession, where they sing and dance to the rhythms of cultural musical instruments and with their cultural outfit, reflecting what God has blessed them with as they come to worship God. The silent entry to the altar in the past, that is, before Vatican II, is contrasted with melodious hymns and the lively procession that characterizes Mutare’s inculturated celebration.

Similar processional activities are performed in some African countries. Uzukwu (1982:60), for instance, describes the solemn procession that characterizes the Zairean Mass: “The celebrant and ministers enter the church in procession, swaying gracefully to the rhythm of the entrance song. Each carries his symbol of office, which differs from region to region.” In Mutare diocese, those who join in the procession have different cultural outfits, not symbols of office. The procession that stretches a reasonable distance comes into the church where everybody joins in the singing. (See photo)
The singing, dancing and gestures of joy not only act as means of lively participation, but they also depict the cultures of the worshipping community. They also make celebration meaningful. That is, in the present Eucharistic celebration Catholics in Mutare have come to know that the procession is a part of this liturgical celebration because they are involved through participation. Since these activities manifest the culture of the local Shona people and help them to celebrate meaningfully, we regard them as elements of inculturation. In Mutare diocese, they have brought newness to the peoples’ way of celebration as well as new understanding of what the Eucharist is about. The new understanding comes from the Church’s liturgical renewal that encourages inculturation as well as the new orientation among the Catholics. This means that they have come to understand that the procession is not for the priest and the two servers alone, and that it is no longer a short, un-ceremonial walk from the sacristy to the altar. Instead, it is a joyful activity that involves members of the congregation such as the choir, the dancing group, the readers, the altar boys and the priest and when the procession enters the Church, the whole congregation is at stare of joy.

These aspects of inculturation that have just been described have become characteristics of Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese. Depending on the occasion and the parish in the diocese, the extent of inculturation differs with varying degrees of symbolism and importance. When the celebration takes place at the diocesan headquarters—the Cathedral in Mutare—the various aspects of inculturation are blended together. In addition, from the procession to the singing of the ‘Gloria’, women ululate, which is a cultural way of showing how joyous the worshipping community is before the Lord. In other words, the ululation in the context of Eucharistic celebration has been transformed to be an act of praising God during celebration. In various parishes in Mutare diocese, ululation has become spontaneous among women. It has become a new way of celebration, or a transformation. Illustrating this power of transformation in the process of inculturation in general, Shorter (1997:14) recalls: “Inculturation implies that the Christian message transforms a culture. It is also the case that Christianity is transformed by culture, not in a way that falsifies the message, but in the way in which the message is formulated and interpreted anew.” That is, inculturation and Christianization go together.
The emphasis is on the new understanding between the culture and the message as a result of the interaction between them. Chupungco (1989:31) illustrates how authentic inculturation evolves:

In other words, authentic inculturation respects the process of transformation. By this we mean that both the liturgy and culture are able to evolve through mutual insertion and absorption without damage to each other’s identity. Liturgical inculturation does not debilitate culture and its inner dynamism.

Inculturation is not meant to weaken the dynamism of the aspect of culture that is inculturated. Instead, through proper mutual interaction, transformation occurs and a new creation emerges. In the past, people felt shy to participate. But now almost everybody takes part because the Shona culture becomes alive and manifests itself in the peoples’ celebration. This is the newness we talk about. An inculturated Eucharist with a lively celebration is well linked where one stage helps to prepare for a gradual flow of activities that require constant participation from members of the congregation. For example, through processional dancing, singing, ululation and other gestures, the people prepare to listen to the word of God. This stage, with its liturgical rites, is what we call ‘the liturgy of the word.’

8.4.3 Liturgy of the Word

The liturgy of the word is an important part of the Eucharistic celebration. Thus, inculturation must aim at promoting the word of God so that those who celebrate it do so with great respect, participation and understanding, in the hope that the word proclaimed will transform them. The General Instruction (1974: xxi, No.9) states the importance of the word of God and also advises how to celebrate it meaningfully:

When the scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and it is Christ, present in his word, who proclaims the gospel. The readings should be listened to with respect, they are a principal element of the liturgy. In the biblical readings, God’s word is addressed to all men [and women] of every era and is understandable in itself, but a homily, as a lively explanation of the word, increases its effectiveness and is an integral part of the service.
The aim in this sub-section is to identify the elements of the liturgy of the word that are applicable to this discussion and explain what in them constitutes inculturation. We begin by examining the language and the text used at the liturgy of the word especially in Mutare diocese.

8.4.3.1. Language and Liturgical Texts

Language is a powerful tool not only in communication but also in ritual celebration, because what one celebrates must be meaningful to one. Lumbalala’s (1998:xii) opinion is helpful here when he remarks: “All peoples must worship God and remember Christ from within their own imaginative and language patterns.” Chupungco (1992:38) gives reasons why the language of the worshipping community must be used in the celebration of the Eucharist. These are the reasons: “The result is a liturgy whose language, rites and symbols admirably relate to the community of worship as they evoke experiences of life, human values, paint vivid images of God’s creation, and call to mind the peoples’ history.” The opinions of Lumbala and Chupungco challenge us when we come to the liturgical texts used in our Eucharistic celebration. The question to be asked is whether the liturgical texts are original, imaginative and creative works of the worshipping community—in this case, our diocese in Mutare.

Basically, in Mutare the two liturgical books for Eucharistic celebration—the Shona missal and *mharidzo dzomu Bhaibheri dzamvondo ose nedzaMazuva Makuru eGore* (Sunday Bible Readings and other important days of the year)—are in Shona. But they are all translated from Latin and English texts. The original background from where these texts were translated did not take into consideration the Shona cultural patterns. Though people understand these texts because they are read in their language, the texts, especially the prayer types, do not reflect the depth of the culture of the Shona people. They may touch peoples’ hearts but not profoundly to the core because they are not original. Chupungco (1992:51) has an answer to the problem when he suggests: “Any form of inculturated liturgy, however culturally dynamic in its expression, remains a type of translation and hence cannot satisfy all the requirements of a liturgy that is able to answer
every local need.” Translated texts do not satisfy completely the cultural needs of the local people that use them because they are always on the level of translation. The spontaneity and originality that characterize a language may be lacking. In other words, there is need to create new texts that originate from the cultural life of the people; that is, from the culture of the Shona people—Catholics in Mutare diocese. The following words documented by Fleming (see Fleming & Tufano 1997:4) should encourage, motivate and spur Catholics in Mutare into action:

We have begun to restore our worship so that texts and rites might express more clearly the holy things they signify [and that] the Christian people, as far as is possible, should be able to understand them easily and to take part in them in a celebration which is full, active, and the community’s own.

The emphasis in the quotation above is in understanding and taking part actively because both the texts and the rites are meaningful to those using them. Thus, the liturgical texts used in Mutare diocese must be allowed to speak to the hearts of Catholics that use them.

It was argued in chapter two that inculturation is an on-going process. Through this on-going process, it is hoped that the texts to be used in Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese will emerge from the people, where they will be able to express their faith, their cultural belief and their whole worldview. The language of the worshipping community has an important role to play in the proclamation, understanding and sharing of the word. Both language and liturgical texts that originate from the local people are elements of inculturation because they help to bring about new meaning and understanding about what the people are celebrating. It is possible to say that the liturgical texts used in Mutare diocese are partly inculturated by virtue of their translation. They will become fully inculturated, however, when these liturgical texts and the prayers used at Mass cease to be merely translated works—that is, when they become the original works of the local hierarchy, liturgists and theologians. This is when the richness of Shona culture will be freely and beautifully expressed.
8.4 3.2 Enthronement and Dancing

Another important aspect of the liturgy of the word that calls for our serious consideration is the ritual of ‘enthronement.’ Enthronement in this context refers to the ceremony that accompanies the Bible to the lectern with dignity and respect. In the early times of Christianity, the Bible, especially the book of the Gospels, was highly revered. Emminghaus (1978:144) explains how this practice was observed:

The material book of the gospels was always the object of great respect, and in earlier times was even expensively bound (this is why according to Ordo Romanus 1 it was handled like a treasure and sealed up in a casket after Mass). It was adorned with precious stones and ivory, and the text was ornamented with miniatures and elaborate initials.

Recognizing the importance of the book of the Gospels, inculturation encourages a lively ceremony that befits this sacred book in the form of enthronement. Referring to enthronement as it is done in the Ndzon-Melon Mass, in Cameroon, Uzukwu (1982:57) records:

This part is dominated by the enthronement of the Book of the Gospels, the reading and homily… With singing and dancing, the congregation acclaims the Book of the Gospels presented by the celebrant. After the explanation of the theme of the celebration by the commentator, all sit down to listen to the three readings, during which an instrumentalist plays light background music.

Uzukwu is brief in his analysis of enthronement at the Zairean Mass. According to Uzukwu (1982:62), “The Zairean Mass emphasizes this special role of the word by ritual delegation of readers and a ceremonial enthronement of the Gospels…” Before Vatican II, not much emphasis was placed on the lively celebration of the word of God. Besides, since the word was proclaimed in Latin, it did not touch the hearts of the people in Mutare because they did not understand what was read. However, readings were also repeated in the vernacular. With the introduction of the use of the vernacular by Vatican II, the celebration of the word of God becomes more meaningful. From Uzukwu’s report, it is likely that enthronement is not practiced everywhere. Though not all the parishes in
Mutare diocese practice enthronement, because it takes time, most of the parishes do practice the enthronement of the book of the Gospels especially during important feasts.

There is enthronement of the Bible in all the Eucharistic celebrations on diocesan level at the Cathedral in Mutare diocese. The enthronement of the sacred readings in Mutare diocese is done before the reading of the Gospel. After the second reading, or, in some parishes before the readings start, some members of the choir, with dancing boys and girls, go to the middle of the Church with the Bible lifted up. A brief silence ensues. Then those carrying the Bible supply background music in which everyone joins to sing. The Bible is reverently opened, lifted high and shown to the members of the congregation. The procession proceeds up to the altar, where the person carrying the Bible kneels down, and hands it over with a few words to the deacon or the priest, who lifts it higher for all to see. Before handing the Bible over to the reader, these accompanying words are said: “Our spiritual leader, your people in this congregation request that you read the word of God to them so that they may hear it for their spiritual nourishment.” Unlike the practice before Vatican II when a server at Mass unceremoniously carried or transferred the Missal from the right to the left side of the altar, enthronement involves more people who carry the Bible with singing and dancing so as to enthrone it on the lectern with dignity.

In other words, just as chiefs are enthroned in their village Kraal in Shona culture, the ‘Word of God’—Christ himself, the ‘King of Kings and the Lord of Lords’—deserves even more respect and dignity when Catholics gather to celebrate the Eucharist. It must be emphasized that Eucharistic inculturation encourages active participation. The activities surrounding enthronement not only prepare the congregation to listen to the word of God with much attention, they also encourage participation. Whatever helps the Catholics to relive their culture, pray fervently and participate actively at Eucharistic celebration needs to be encouraged at Eucharistic inculturation. In Mutare diocese, only the dancing girls and boys, with few members of the choir in their cultural outfit, accompany the book of the Gospels to the altar.
8.4.3.3 Homily: The importance of Proverbs

All the ceremonies surrounding the liturgy of the word culminate in the reading of the Gospel and its explanation through the homily. During homily, the preacher tries to make a positive impact on the listening congregation through a well-organized, well-articulated and home-driven message. The ability to sustain the interest of the people depends to a large extent on the effective methods of communication used. This is where the advice of John Paul II (1995:85) is necessary as he recalls the usefulness of African values:

The traditional forms of communication must never be underestimated. In many places in Africa they are still very useful and effective. Moreover, they are less costly and more accessible. These forms include songs and music, mimes and the theatre, proverbs and fables. As vehicles of the wisdom and soul of the people, they are a precious source of material and of inspiration for the modern media.

This important advice should also be a concern and a priority of the Mutare clergy as much as the media practitioners. That is, all those who preach and those who share the word of God must make use of Shona cultural values in preaching, especially Shona proverbs. For the sermon or homily to be well inculturated in our Eucharistic celebration, it must be relevant to the life of the people. Therefore, the preacher must know the culture of the people very well so as to refer to their cultural values in order to communicate the ideals to the listeners. The priests working in Mutare diocese are made up of local, African and European missionaries. On their arrival, missionaries spend some time learning the Shona language and culture to enable them to communicate through the people’s medium. During the sermon, therefore, proverbs are freely used. It is usual to hear both local and missionary priests beginning some sentences with ‘Vakuru vanoti…’ That is, ‘The elders say…’ At the mention of this phrase, the people become more attentive both for the meaning and completion of the proverb. When the people have the opportunity to share the word of God, they use proverbs more frequently than the priests. Appreciating the importance of African proverbs, Healey and Sybertz (1996:42) remark:

Another important aspect of African proverbs is their participatory nature which fits in very well with relationships and community values. Sometimes a preacher or a teacher gives the first half of the proverb, and the congregation or audience responds with the
second half: unity is strength… division is weakness. The hen with chicks… doesn’t swallow the worm… These examples are characteristic of the great amount of participation and involvement that occur in African liturgies…

The use of proverbs in Mutare, especially during sermons, is an aspect of inculturation because they are rooted in Shona culture. Proverbs communicate messages and capture peoples’ attention and interest. Proverbs as elements of inculturation thus help to promote the culture of the people.

The posture people take when the word of God is proclaimed must also be in line with their culture. This explains why in Mutare diocese everybody, except the reader, sits down during the Scripture readings because the elder is speaking the words of wisdom that must be listened to carefully and with respect. In Nigeria, on the other hand, people stand up when the Gospel is read because standing up is a sign of respect to an important person. In line with the mind of Vatican II, each Episcopal Conference is to determine the appropriate posture suitable to its context. For those in Southern Africa, Lumbalala (1998:31) illustrates: “Most of the time the celebrant and the faithful are sitting down, which is the usual position during all important gatherings in Africa.” The liturgy of the word nourishes the people spiritually and prepares them for another important nourishment in the liturgy of the Eucharist. The use of proverbs in Mutare diocese is an outstanding method of incultrating the proclamation of the word of God. The Liturgy of the Word and Liturgy of the Eucharist are key elements in the Catholic Eucharistic celebration. (See Photo)
8.4.4 Liturgy of the Eucharist

The liturgy of the Eucharist is another part of the Eucharistic celebration where I would like to examine the elements of inculturation that make up this section, in particular, and the chapter in general. For purposes of clarification, it is necessary to mention the components of the liturgy of the Eucharist. The *General Instruction* (1974:No. 48) gives these components in this format:

The Church has arranged the celebration of the Eucharistic liturgy to correspond to these words and actions of Christ: 1) In the preparation of the gifts, bread, wine and water are brought to the altar, same elements which Christ used. 2) The Eucharistic prayer is the hymn of thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation; the offerings become the body and blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful and in communion they receive the body and blood of Christ as the apostles did from his hands.

The Last Supper represents the institution of the Eucharist like a family celebration. That is, Jesus and his apostles at table. In the same vein, family celebrations in Mutare have not only a greater import but also a significant impact on the people. The African family system, symbolic languages, gestures and dancing are discussed under the liturgy of the Eucharist as model and elements of inculturation in Mutare. A good place to begin is with the African family celebration, so as to determine how it constitutes an element of inculturation.

8.4.4.1 Significance of the African Family Celebration

The image of an African extended family system is well described by the Synod Fathers (African Synod 1995:148) in these words. “This image emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust.” The emphasis is on the extended family system which is not only binding among Africans, but also serves as a natural insurance and a cultural security. The African family is characterized not only by the extended family system but also by communality and good relationships, expressed in many African values. Healey and Sybertz (1996:107) outline these relationships and values thus:
The African emphasis on personal relationships is closely connected to family values. African family values are inclusive. Whether people are members of the immediate family or the extended family or close friends or even visitors, every one participates in the close family relationships and friendships.

These characteristics of an African extended family and family values are very important and they are appropriate models for inculturation in Mutare diocese. For example, an African family is characterized by natural homeliness where care and concern are expressed. In other words, it is a place where warmth in relationships abounds. This warmth in relationships builds confidence and creates a sense of belonging. Therefore, celebrating as an African family is an aspect of inculturation that is necessary for the growth of the Church in Mutare diocese. Emphasizing the need for the Church to model herself to the extended family system, Nwagwu (2000:23) affirms:

The main challenge that the Church in Africa faces in the third millennium is to become what it aspires for, the family of God. Its goal is to be a Christ-centered, vibrant and people-oriented Church where the African sense of the family is experienced by all. The ideal African family is based on the extended family system where members are united in a common ancestry which gives each person his/her identity.

Identity is very important in our inculturated Eucharistic celebration. As people are identified in the families, our Eucharistic celebration in Mutare is to be patterned in that way to enable every participant to be identified through recognition. The warmth people feel and the encouragement they experience at small Christian communities in Mutare, make them feel at home and bring the best of their talents to serve the community where they belong. When all the members see themselves as belonging to the community, there is unity in their celebration because they have a binding root-metaphor of ancestorship. Fogliacco (2001:145) expresses the same sentiment thus:

This implies that members of [the] human race, with all their differences and divisions, cannot be united immediately among themselves; they will become brothers and sisters only by reference to a common Father, which implies the Church precisely as family of God.
This is the effect of belonging to an extended family system. As a family in different parishes in Mutare, the members of the Church try to know themselves and in this way they experience love and concern, which encourages participation. An inculturated Eucharist celebrated as a family helps to attract people to one another, encourages them to participate in celebration so that every talent is used to build up the Church and serve the community. The promotion of small Christian communities, each made up of several families, in Mutare diocese is a testimony of the importance of celebrating as a family. In Mutare, ten to fifteen families come together to make up one Christian community. An inculturated Eucharist celebrated in this context of the African extended family, which is characterized by communality and family values, brings fulfillment because each member present is aware of the symbols used, understands the language spoken, appreciates the gestures, and participates in the ceremonies.

8.4.4.2 Symbolic Languages, Gestures and Dancing

In line with the other elements outlined in this sub-section are symbolic language, gestures and dancing, which are discussed together below. The place of symbolic language and gestures as aspects of inculturation in Mutare diocese is of great importance in the ritual celebration of the Eucharist. Situating the place of symbols and symbolic language and the roles gestures play in the liturgical worship, McCabe (1986:15) elaborates:

> When we deal with the symbols of worship, and with the highest symbol—language—we get at the heart of the question. If signs are to be true, if they are what anchors us to our world and thus to God who created the world, they must be meaningful to those who use them and also convey a timelessness, a sense of past, and future since our faith is rooted in the past and seeks fulfillment in the future.

Our communication with one another in Mutare is not only by verbal experiences. We communicate through signs and gestures and more deeply with symbols. In liturgical worship, gestures like the raising of hands, bowing of heads and looking at the sacred with awe are the various ways we express our inner feelings. Though no words are uttered, there is still an inner satisfaction that we have communicated profoundly in a
more symbolic manner. When we are in the presence of God, we also approach God through gestures, believing that they are our innate symbolic ways of communication. Christ also presented himself to us symbolically. Gestures are interspersed at Eucharistic celebrations in Mutare. For example, people genuflect or bow at the altar and readers kneel in front of the celebrant for blessings before reading. Through these symbols and gestures, the Eucharistic celebration becomes meaningful. The emphasis in Mutare is on the gesture of kneeling down where the two readers come to ask for blessings before reading. This gesture is different from bowing or genuflecting at the altar as it is done in some cultures before the readers go to read. The Eucharistic celebration in Mutare before Vatican II was characterized by less-active participation and an absence of any form of African cultural expression.

Commenting on the importance of gestures in relation to African and European liturgies, Ndiokwere (1994b:153) observes:

Gestures may be so protracted as in African liturgy that the celebration can be noisy… The same liturgical celebration, as in Europe, can look so stereotyped and dull, noiseless and ‘monastic in style’ that a visitor may have to attend Mass elsewhere to satisfy the Sunday obligation… It matters a lot if participants at such celebrations and assemblies appreciate, enjoy them and long to return to them. Where they find it boring the interest to take part again continues to diminish and may finally die off.

It is important, therefore, to use gestures and symbols that are meaningful to the people and which encourage them to participate actively at Mass. Of course, there were few gestures made during silent Masses before the Vatican II liturgical renewal, but they did not speak to the heart of a Zimbabwean or, precisely, a Mutare Catholic. At silent Masses—what some called ‘low Masses’ before Vatican II—there was no singing and every prayer was recited. In such an atmosphere, the few gestures made did not evoke powerful sentiments from the people.

Chupungco (1989:46) is right in his observation when he remarks: “Some words unaccompanied by gestures fall flat, others deprived of images taken from nature and
human experience arouse no response.” In other words, symbols, language and gestures that are capable of arousing the sentiment of people must spring up from their culture and must be meaningful to them. This is where an inculturated Eucharistic celebration is very important because the Shona people use the riches of their culture to worship God in spirit and truth. Pondy echoes the same sentiment thus:

> The creation of [a] Black Christ in Africa does not diminish at all the historical Christ. On the contrary, it enriches the universal meaning of the message of God who became one of us in order to proclaim Christ as Lord of all nations of the world, through all their authentic riches: their language, their gestures, their art, their whole life and culture, which are God’s gifts and should be returned to him as a cultural offering (see Healey and Sybertz 1996:92).

When gestures and symbols used in Eucharistic celebration are irrelevant to the culture of the worshipping community, they become useless and fail to communicate. On the other hand, they become elements of inculturation that communicate effectively when they are deeply rooted in the culture of those who use them. In Mutare, the various gestures displayed when hymns like ‘Lord have mercy’ and ‘Gloria’ are sung, are meaningful ways of praying. These hymns are sung in the Shona language, accompanied by lively gestures where everybody takes active part because he or she is emotionally affected.

When the Shona language and gestures help people to pray meaningfully and to participate actively, they serve as real elements of inculturation. In this context, Lumbalala (1998:25) makes a beautiful synthesis between prayer and dance: “The body necessarily forms part of the prayer. And since rhythm constitutes a fundamental reference to the intelligibility and experience of the universe, dance becomes a necessity for prayer.” This means, in Mutare for instance, that dancing in the presence of the Lord at inculturated Eucharistic celebration is understood as part of praying. Thus, the Shona music in Mutare diocese is valued and cherished as a means of worship. I agree with Ndiokwere (1994b:179), therefore, when he affirms: “Instead of the colonial and foreign melodies of Bach and Handel and the Gregorian Chant, Africans now bring in their traditional local instruments and hymns into the liturgy to make it more lively and enjoyable.” This is an encouraging development that never happened before Vatican II.
This is the importance of inculturation. With these symbols, gestures and traditional music, our Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese is enriched.

8.4.4.3 Eucharistic Prayers

Another element of inculturation to be discussed here under the liturgy of the Eucharist is the Eucharistic prayer. The Eucharistic prayer is an important prayer in the liturgy of the Eucharist. The General Instruction (1974: No 54) recalls the place of this prayer at Mass in the following words:

The Eucharistic prayer, a prayer of thanksgiving and sanctification, is the center and high point of the entire celebration. In an introductory dialogue, the priest invites the people to lift their hearts to God in prayer [which] he addresses in their name to the Father through Jesus Christ. The meaning of the prayer is that the whole congregation joins Christ in acknowledging the works of God and in offering the sacrifice.

Since it is an important prayer of thanksgiving, it is necessary that Catholics in Mutare diocese be allowed to say this prayer according to their own cultural expression. That is, let the prayer originate from Zimbabweans themselves.

Uzukwu (1982:43) acknowledges the efforts made so far, especially under the leadership of A. Shorter. He also outlines the important features of this prayer thus:

One common feature of these prayers is that each—be it Praise, Acclamation, Epiclesis, Institution Narrative, Anamnesis or Intercession—is composed under the influence of a prayer from African traditional religion. Indeed, in many cases, African traditional prayers are simply taken word for word into the Eucharistic Prayers.

The Eucharistic prayer that is used in Mutare diocese is still a translation of the English version into the Shona language. There is no plan at the moment to have any Eucharistic prayer that originates from a Shona cultural background. The insight from Shorter, cited above, is a good guide for future Eucharistic prayer in Mutare diocese. Other neighboring African countries can act as motivators. For example, there are Igbo and Zairean
Eucharistic prayers. In an Igbo Eucharistic prayer, Lumbala records about thirty interjections between the priest and the people. This dialogue takes place during the preface alone and it fosters participation. There are sixteen interjections in the Zairean Mass. In the course of these dialogues, both the priest and the people are able to offer prayers to God through different responses that speak to their hearts. These are unique ways in which African people pray and which may be lacking in Mutare diocese as far as the Eucharistic prayer is concerned, because what is available now is not composed within the Shona cultural setting.

In his contribution towards enriching Eucharistic prayers, Sipuka (2000:257) suggests an inclusion of those prayers that touch the life of an African person. Prayers of this nature which he recommends include: a “prayer for healing, [a] prayer for protection against evil spirits, [a] prayer for rain and fertility of the land, [a] prayer for employment, [a] prayer for peace and harmony in the families and [the] entire nation.” When the prayer for the fruits of the womb are offered during Eucharistic prayers, those barren women who are affected would feel strengthened in the sense that they would feel their problems are the concerns of the church. Such prayers, rendered with the culture of the people in mind during the Eucharistic prayer, make the Eucharistic prayer an element of inculturation.

Our diocese in Mutare has not yet composed any Eucharistic prayer. In fact there is none in the Zimbabwean Catholic Church. Pointing out this lack in Mutare diocese in the course of this research reflects a willingness on the part of the author to face up to the challenge in future. It is hoped that the insight gained from this research can act both as a pointer and a guide for our diocese to follow in future. Another important area that needs to be included, not only in the Eucharistic prayer, but also in some other parts of the Mass, is the invocation of ancestors.
8.4.4.4 Invocation of the Ancestors

Philippians 4:8 speaks about the goodness of God’s creation made manifest in Christ. The full text reads: “Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.” This passage encourages us to think of whatever is noble, pleasing, commendable and praiseworthy in our life, so as to bring them along with us in our worship of Christ. The most appropriate bible passage for the context of this section is from Sirach (44:1, 10-11). The Jerusalem version brings out the meaning of this text succinctly thus: “Let us praise illustrious men [and women], our ancestors in their successive generations. Here is a list of generous people whose good works have not been forgotten. In their descendants there remains a rich inheritance born of them.” This passage is read as an alternative to the first reading on 26 July every year when the Catholic Church honors the parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary—Saints Joachim and Anne.

Since ancestors are held in high esteem in Zimbabwe, they fall within that category that the Bible refers to as ‘honorable’. The next reference is from the ‘Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity’ (Ad Gentes Divinitus), No. 9, which states: “So whatever goodness is found in the minds and hearts of men [and women] or in the particular customs and cultures of peoples, far from being lost is purified, raised to higher level and reaches its perfection, for the glory of God…” The emphasis here is on ‘far from being lost is purified, raised to a higher level and reaches its perfection’. This phrase is central in the understanding of inculturation. This is because it is in line with what Arrupe (see Pinto 1985:13) calls the ‘principle that animates, directs, and unifies the culture, transforming it and making it so as to bring about a new creation’.

From this discussion so far, I intend to argue that ancestral invocation at Mass can constitute an element of inculturation in our diocese. First and foremost, ancestors are central in our cultural and religious beliefs. Secondly, a concept such as this, which is regarded as honorable, should not be allowed to be lost. Thirdly, if the invocation of
ancestors is inculturated at Mass in Mutare diocese, it does not mean that they are other mediators outside Christ, because we channel all our prayers through Christ. Finally and very often, we ask the saints to pray for us or we ask one another—the living ones—to pray for us in the hope that our requests will be fulfilled in Christ. In the same way, when the invocation of ancestors is practiced at Mass it does not negate the understanding of Christ as our only mediator. Reflecting on this issue, Lumbalala (1998:47) explains:

The mediation of Christ is universal and ultimate. It achieves fullness in the cross and glorification. The mediation of the ancestors is limited to their descendants and does not achieve the plenitude of the kingdom of God. Its efficacy is not comprehensive except within the grace of Christ, who reveals the infinite love of God. Before the revelation of Christ, our ancestors were a sign of the nearness of God, of love of God.

If the invocation of African ancestors at Mass does not undermine the mediation of Christ, it is reasonable that it should be inculturated and implemented. In Mutare diocese currently there is not yet an official authorization of the invocation of ancestors during Eucharistic celebrations. In fact, there is no official statement whether to include the invocation of ancestors or not. It is only during the ordination of priests that the choir, while singing the litany, includes one or two family ancestors of the priests to be ordained. Should the invocation of ancestors be introduced in our Eucharistic celebration in Mutare, we believe that Christ, who is both the victim of the sacrifice and the priest who offers the sacrifice, will elevate, purify and transform the intercessions of the ancestors. This chapter advocates a re-orientation that will bring in new insight in Mutare diocese as far as the invocation of ancestors is concerned.

In the hope that Christ has the power to transform the intercessions of the ancestors, their invocation on Sunday and during Solemnity Masses in Mutare diocese will highlight the cultural relevance of our celebration and also make all the various family members present at that celebration feel that they are all together as a family. This is where I consider the invocation of the ancestors as an element of inculturation in our diocese, though not yet inculturated.
8.4.4.5 Local Staple Food and Drink as Elements of Eucharistic Inculturation

Our ancestors, while they lived, were nourished by their own staple food which they handed over to their descendants. It is this staple food that we now turn to as another element constituting inculturation of the Eucharist in our diocese. The discussion on the use of African staple food in chapter three tried to establish the fact that the present unleavened bread and wine from grapes are different from the main staple food and drink in Zimbabwe. In this sub-section, I intend to demonstrate that the local staple food and drink are possible elements of Eucharistic inculturation in our diocese. I also intend to determine why these staple food items are not yet used for Eucharistic celebrations in Mutare diocese, as well as to explore possible ways of finding a solution. My point of departure in this discussion is the popular Igbo dictum which says: ‘ihe onye na-eri, ka ona-enye chi ya.’ That is, ‘what one eats is what one offers to one’s God.’

Jesus used bread and wine at the Last Supper because they were part of his own culture. It would not make any sense to him and his audience if foreign elements had been used at that memorable meal. Lumbala (1998:54) stresses the fact that Jesus was aware of his cultural heritage in these lines:

Jesus took bread and wine to show that he could celebrate with his disciples. No one thought to challenge him. He was using the accepted staple common in meals in his times. Jesus was born a Jew not because Judaism constituted a theological necessity, but because to be human is to be situated in time and in space.

In terms of celebration, Jesus was not lacking in preserving his culture. That is why, in Uzukwu’s (1980:371) words: “[Jesus] was faithful to the Jewish tradition of blessing—at least to the structure.” However, we know that the language (Aramaic) Jesus used at the Last Supper is not the same language we are using in our Eucharistic celebration today. Down through the ages, there have been some modifications from the exact ways Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples. The early Christians, for example, celebrated the Eucharist at individual homes, where people brought bread from various homes for the celebration. It is likely the bread they brought was not unleavened. What
was more important for the early Christians was bread, which they broke together in fellowship and in prayer (Acts 2:42, 46).

In the course of history, the East celebrated and continues to celebrate the Eucharist without unleavened bread. In the 15th century, consequently, the Church in the West and in the East agreed that the Eucharist whether celebrated with unleavened or leavened bread, is valid. Uzukwu (1980:378) sees this agreement between the East and the West as appropriate when he affirms: “Apart from the disciplinary disagreement over the use of leavened or unleavened bread in the East and West, the question was amicably settled to the satisfaction of all parties during the Council of Ferreira-Florence (1438-39).” It is on the basis of these cultural and historical changes that Lumbala (1998:53) concludes: “Simply stated, the history of the liturgy shows clearly that the Eucharist materials can change and have not always remained the same in the Christian Churches. The example of such historical precedents justifies further discussion about the needs and developments in present-day African liturgies.”

The various examples cited above serve as background for our discussion on African staple food and drink as elements of Eucharistic inculturation. In Shona traditional religion, people offer sacrifices with their own animals and with the staple food of their land. Uzukwu (1980:372) alludes to this point in this statement: “All that form part of the world of the African are potential elements of ritual.” Commenting on the appropriateness of using local and indigenous food for traditional sacrifice among the Xhosa people in South Africa, Sipuka (2000:252) remarks:

Secondly, it is … food that has been traditionally used for sacrifice. It would render more intelligible the statement that what is being offered is the ‘fruit of the earth and work of human hands’ because maize, which is one of the main ingredients of Xhosa beer, is locally produced and continues to be part of the staple food.

Various attempts have been made in some parts of Africa to use local staple food items for Eucharistic celebration. Uzukwu gives a background to this with his analysis of what he calls ‘elements, of wide diffusion in Africa.’ This suggests that those elements that are
widely accepted in Africa and in some parts of the world are to be considered more appropriate for possible use at Eucharistic celebration. However, it could also be argued that it is by experimenting with those elements known only in a particular local area or country that other countries will come to know and appreciate their relevance to that area and the local church. For the two elements that serve as food and drink for the celebration of the Eucharist, Uzukwu (1980:383) remarks in his synthesis:

> Among the grains, rice, maize, and millet are the most diffused. Among the three, maize and millet possess the greater capacity of being cultivated in Africa. If one has to make a choice between maize and millet, one would certainly choose millet. It is the grain most probably domesticated in Africa spreading to the Far East from the continent; it is possible that the wide encounter of the species found in Greece originated from Africa… Between banana wine and palm wine, one would prefer palm wine because of its age and diffusion in the continent.

Though this is the opinion of Uzukwu, another person may reverse the choices between maize, millet, banana and palm wine. In Zimbabwe, for example, Chibuku – (local beer) is dominant and more relevant. The fact is that this diffusion theory provides a good background for Mutare diocese. This is because in Mutare diocese it is maize that serves diverse purposes. At offertory, for example, women bring food items like maize, vegetable and fruits produced locally. During Matatenda (harvest thanksgiving), the bulk of what is presented in rural areas is maize. Though maize is produced in good quantity in Mutare, however, no attempt has been made to use it in the form of bread for Eucharistic celebration. The reason for not doing so can be summed up as ‘lack of awareness of its possibility.’

Chapter nine will consider other reasons why the local staple food is not used for Eucharistic celebration in Mutare, but the present chapter serves to initiate this awareness campaign. It does so by presenting some practical experiments of using local staple food which are carried out in different parts of Africa. This will serve to make Catholics in Mutare aware that such experiments can be carried out in our diocese. Lumbala (1998:57) has a narrative account of some of these experiments in the following lines:
In Congo (Zaire), we have successfully carried out several experiments using fresh, grated manioc soaked in water to produce a flour of fine texture. This flour produces fine slices of bread, which last over two months if they are properly baked. We have also made corn wine that remains wholesome much longer than palm wine. It is made by mixing dry corn with a double measure of sugar and four measures of water.

From a close look at the experiment narrated by Lumbala and the diffusion theory enunciated by Uzukwu, we can deduce that maize is a common denominator in the two accounts. Maize is generally eaten in most parts of the world in different forms, though it may not be the staple food for some. Maize, therefore, can be a constitutive element of inculturation in the celebration of the Eucharist in our diocese. This is because in Mutare, when people say that there is an abundant harvest or that there is crop failure, people think about maize. It is produced by every family and eaten by all in different forms. If it is inculturated as processed or refined bread, and used at Mass, people will accept it as the product of the work of their hands, produced from their own land. Wine can also be produced from maize. This means that maize is a versatile food element that can serve multi-purposes.

Theologically, therefore, we can argue that since the people in Mutare are nourished when they eat maize food, in the same way Christ will give his spiritual nourishment to them if they celebrate the Eucharist with bread and wine produced from maize. In terms of the unity of the Church, maize as an element of inculturation is not lacking because it is found almost everywhere and eaten almost everywhere in the world, unlike wheat bread and wine grapes that are predominantly Mediterranean food items. As matters stand presently, there is no difference in the use of bread and wine during the time of foreign white missionaries and the use of these same elements at our present time, when we emphasize the importance of inculturation. There is thus need for all in Mutare diocese to convince themselves that the use of local staple food could be experimented on. When we have convinced ourselves through an appropriate awareness campaign, we can then appeal to the Church authorities in Rome to allow us to celebrate the memorial of our Savior Jesus Christ in our cultural setting, a setting that is significant to us in Mutare diocese. In this way, when we also celebrate solemnities like Jesus’ birth and his
resurrection, we can celebrate with our whole heart because our celebrations will be meaningful and relevant to our culture. It is to some of the solemnities of the Church that I now turn for consideration.

8.5 Church Solemnities as Occasions for Inculturation

In addition to the elements that constitute inculturation, there are special occasions in the Church’s Calendar that provide opportunities for inculturation. These occasions are provided by certain solemnities of the Church. The two solemnities chosen for discussion here as occasions for inculturation are Christmas and Easter, which are the greatest solemnities of the Lord celebrated by the Church. They are related to the Eucharist because the Eucharist is a celebration of the paschal mystery of the Lord.

According to the section on General Norms, article 4, in the Roman Missal: “The Church celebrates the paschal mystery on the first day of the week, known as the Lord’s day or Sunday.” Christmas and Easter are about the birth, death and resurrection of Christ. They are about the life of Jesus and about our redemption. The Eucharist that is celebrated during Christmas and Easter, among other solemnities of the Church, needs inculturation because of their importance. As these two solemnities are about the life of Christ, they also touch our lives because the Church is the body of Christ. This explains why we must celebrate them in an inculturated Eucharist. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to make the Eucharistic celebrations of these two solemnities culturally meaningful to the Catholics in Mutare diocese. Sections 11 and 12 of the General Norms (1974) describe the nature and essence of solemnities in these words:

Solemnities are the days of greatest importance and began with first vespers of the preceding day: Several solemnities have their own Vigil Mass to be used when Mass is celebrated in the evening preceding the day.

With special reference to the solemnities of Christmas and Easter, No. 12 concludes:

The celebration of Easter and Christmas continues for eight days. Each octave is governed by its own rules.
This sub-section thus gives attention to the Eucharistic celebrations of Christmas and Easter in order to explain in which sense they provide occasions for inculturation. Attention is paid more to the Vigil Masses because they have room for inculturation. I begin this discussion with Christmas—the day we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ our Savior.

8.5.1 Inculturation of the Christmas Eucharistic Celebration

The Christmas Eucharistic celebration is the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. In discussing Christmas, therefore, I will emphasize the significance of celebrating life in Shona culture in general and how this celebration of life in the Eucharist manifests itself among Catholics in Mutare diocese in particular. Bujo’s view offers a good background for this discussion because he also connects Christmas with life. Situating Christmas in the context of African culture, life and ancestors, Bujo (1995:8) remarks:

To speak of Christmas from the African context is even more urgent since it is the feast when life is celebrated pre-eminently, this divine life which is at the origin of ours. In Africa the importance of life has always been underlined for the family, the clan, and the community of the ancestors.

Part of the focus in this discussion is on the kind of inculturation that brought about the celebration of the birth of Jesus on December 25 every year. Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:213) explains the choice of December 25 thus: “Scholars speculate that the selection of December 25 was aimed at replacing the pagan winter festival dedicated to the unconquered Sun” (Natalis Solis Invicti). The fact that December 25 was selected to replace a popular pagan celebration means that Christmas, by origin, is an inculturation event. This is because there was a transformation and replacement of what existed before—the pagan feast—and the insertion of Christianity into the existing culture to bring about new creation.
In other words, the early Christians transformed the pagan feast, thereby making it meaningful and acceptable to those pagans who had accepted Christianity. Consequently, Catholics under the Roman rite celebrate the birth of Christ on December 25. The celebration of the birth of Jesus among Christians is memorable because by coming into the world, Jesus incarnated himself into the culture of his people so as to be like them, except in sin.

Peoples of different cultures have different ways of celebrating the birth of a child in their own cultural set up. An examination of how some African cultures welcome a newborn child into the world can serve as an example for Eucharistic inculturation. The arrival of a child in Igbo culture, for example, is greeted with ululation by women right from the time of maternity. It is through ululation that the sex of the child is proclaimed and known. On arriving home, the woman’s husband releases some gunshots to signal the birth of a child. The ululation and gunshots are not only particular to the Igbos, they are also important cultural practices used to express moments of joy. Since the arrival of a new baby is God’s gift received with joy. Consequently, this joy is expressed culturally and significantly through ululation and gunshots. The women who brought the good news are served with palm wine and dried meat or stockfish. A special meal is prepared for the woman who has given birth and the members of her family take the meal to her at the hospital maternity ward. When the woman and the new baby return home, people go with gifts to welcome the child and to thank the woman for her courage.

In Shona traditional culture, a woman who is expecting her first child is taken to her father’s home where she gives birth at the care of her parents and relatives. The arrival of a child is also greeted with ululation—what Mr. Muvodzi calls ‘mhururu’ (oral interview on 02/08/05). Unlike in Igbo culture, where the women go together to inform the husband of the woman about the birth of the child, in Shona culture it is the aunt of the woman who goes to announce the birth to the woman’s husband and the family members. When the woman takes the child to the husband’s home, there is joy and celebration and people come with gifts to welcome the child and the mother.
Looking at the two cultures, it is clear that African cultures are rich in symbolic meanings (ululation, the gun shot, in this particular case). Some of these symbolic gestures can be used to inculturate Christmas Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese, thereby making the Christmas Eucharistic celebration a suitable occasion for inculturation.

The gestures that lend themselves for inculturation include: ululation, gunshots, presentation of gifts and expression of joy characterized by singing and dancing. The application of these gestures to childbirth has significant impetus because a child is born and new life has started. Attempts to inculturate the Christmas celebration at the Vigil Mass reflect a difference from the traditional way of celebrating it. In the Catholic Church, traditionally, the crib stands out clearly at Christmas. However, the crib has no specific cultural relevance to Zimbabwe. For the crib to serve any cultural purpose for Mutare diocese it must, therefore, be inculturated. This is already being attempted in an unofficial way in some parishes in Mutare diocese. For example, at the Vigil Mass immediately after the reading of the Gospel, when the news of the birth of Jesus has been announced, the short procession from the sacristy begins. In this procession the woman acting as Mary, accompanied by altar boys and flower girls, brings the statue symbolizing the child Jesus to the crib. As the statue is placed in the crib other women ululate and girls dance with joy. This kind of inculturating practice is gradually catching up in many parishes in Mutare diocese.

Healey and Sybertz have good stories from East Africa depicting the origin of Christmas in the medium of African myth. The mythical aspect of the story is what Healey and Sybertz (1996:66) call ‘Savior-centered mythology.’ The essence of the myth is to show how a good person born of a woman came to fight against the evil that threatened his people. Healey and Sybertz (1996:69) summarize their conclusions from this myth thus:

This reflection on the myth is an excellent example of inculturation, especially when used at Christmas. It is a great blessing when a Sukuma woman gives birth to a child. It is the greatest blessing when Mary gives birth to Jesus. The above song [Savior-centered] can be sung after the reading of the gospel during the Christmas Midnight Liturgy. It can also be accompanied by a Sukuma dance in front of the Christmas Hut.
Here, the ‘Christmas (African) Hut’ replaces the crib. This is also another desire or attempt to inculturate Christmas celebration so as to make it meaningful to Africans in general and Mutare diocese in particular. It is necessary to inculturate Christmas Eucharistic celebration because, as a celebration that marks the beginning of life, it helps to prepare our people in Mutare to anticipate the celebration that offers them hope for the life to come. That is, the celebration of the resurrection of Christ—the solemnity of Easter.

8.5.2 Inculturating the Easter Eucharistic Celebration

Each time we celebrate the Eucharist, we re-live the paschal mystery of the Lord as explained at the beginning of section 8.5. In other words, Easter has a direct link with the Eucharist. It is important to inculturate the Easter Eucharistic celebration in order to make it meaningful to Catholics in Mutare diocese. The aim here is to examine how this celebration can be regarded as an occasion for inculturation, to review what attempts have been made in some African countries at this type of inculturation, and to describe how Easter Eucharistic celebration has been inculturated in Mutare diocese itself. Our Sunday Visitor’s Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:331) explains the origin of the word Easter in these lines:

The feast of the resurrection of Christ derives its name from Eastre, the goddess of spring, according to St. Bede the Venerable, but others think that the term comes from Hebdomada Alba when Alba (‘white’) was mistranslated into High German word for dawn, when the Risen Lord was seen by the Holy woman.

Associating Easter to the goddess Eastre means linking Easter to a period of spring that offers new hope of renewal, when new life will spring up again. In other words, something must die so that new life can come up again. To commemorate Jesus’ dying and rising to new life, the Church emphasizes the triduum—Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday as the most important days of the Holy Week. The African background that will enable us to understand and appreciate the importance of the
resurrection is the African belief in life after death. Mbiti (1969:25) insists on this belief in this affirmation:

Similarly, death is a process which removes a person gradually from the sasa period to the zamani. After the physical death, the individual continues to exist in the sasa period and does not immediately disappear from it. He is remembered by relatives and friends who knew him by name… The living dead is a person who is physically dead but alive in the memory of those who knew him in his life as well as being alive in the world of the spirits. So long as the living dead is thus remembered, he is in the state of personal immortality.

It is this mentality, I suppose, that enables Zimbabwean Christians to be very much attracted to the ceremonies of Good Friday—the day Jesus died, and the Easter Vigil—the resurrection of Jesus as Lord. For those who believe in the resurrection, Good Friday is a possible day for inculturating the ceremonies of mourning the dead. This means that the way for the people of Mutare to celebrate the ceremonies of Good Friday must be different from the traditional Catholic way of celebrating it. The ceremonies must reflect the cultural way of mourning the dead. The lack of this cultural aspect at Holy Week ceremonies leads Healey and Sybertz (1996:247) to report the regret expressed by some Catholics in Tanzania:

Ordinary Africans in Tanzania say that one important feature is missing from the traditional liturgical services: a remembering of the wake of Jesus Christ, that is, some remembrance of the mourning period from Jesus’ death on Good Friday afternoon to the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night. The wake and mourning period[s] are very important in African customs.

Describing an inculturated area of a particular day of mourning, Healey and Sybertz (1996:24) continue:

Opening Song: I am overwhelmed by grief (literal meaning is I am crying with Great Sadness). This is a traditional Sukuma song about a mother whose son died. She laments his death and the fact that she has no one to help her or to take care of her in her old age. This is an excellent example of inculturation where a meaningful traditional African song is integrated into the Catholic liturgy.

This practice of mourning and keeping vigil on Good Friday and Holy Saturday respectively is a good illustration of how Easter celebration can be inculturated. It makes
Easter celebration more meaningful when the ceremonies take the cultural outlook of those that celebrate them. The above cultural understanding of Easter makes it an element of inculturation. This is because the Easter Vigil celebration is culturally meaningful to our people in Mutare diocese since it relates to their culture and life.

In Mutare diocese, the ceremonies of Good Friday are well attended. The aspect of inculturation during the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday is the active participation of many in different ways. Some carry the Cross, others lead the Stations of the Cross. Shona hymns conveying messages of bereavement and mourning are popularly sung by all. With such hymns, people cover a long distance on foot without getting tired. At the Easter Vigil Mass, the celebration is done in the Shona language. However, more effort is needed to have Easter ceremonies celebrated in a cultural manner. For example, an all night vigil is a prominent feature in Zimbabwean culture and can be easily adapted in our inculturation attempts in Mutare diocese. The all night vigil in Shona culture is called ‘pungwe.’ Explaining the meaning of pungwe among the Shona people as well as commenting on its significance among the present church members in Zimbabwe, Presler (1996:12) writes:

Since Zimbabwe’s achievement of political independence in 1980, dusk-to-dawn gatherings have become especially popular in most churches, both those founded by Western missionaries and those founded by Africans. The frequency of pungwe gatherings and the diversity of churches in which they are held merits calling the phenomenon the pungwe movement, or the vigil movement in Shona Christianity.

For the Catholic Church in Mutare diocese, the Vigil Mass of Holy Saturday should reflect the resurrection we celebrate, but well rooted in Shona culture, where death is not the end but a transformation (vita mutatur non tolitur). An inculturated solemnity makes possible a proper understanding of celebrations of other joyful moments in peoples’ lives. This is because the Christ they serve is alive and so they will live to worship him in their culture and with their whole lives. The hope in the resurrection propels Christians to celebrate the other joyful moments in their lives with great enthusiasm.
8.6 Inculturation of Eucharistic Celebration of Joyful Moments

Another occasion for inculturation is the Eucharistic celebration of some joyful moments in the lives of Catholics in Mutare diocese, where they receive the sacraments that make their Christian vocation real and practical. The emphasis here is on Eucharistic celebrations in which priestly ordination takes place and Catholic marriage is solemnized. Eucharistic celebrations of these two moments is essential to Catholics because through marriage, life is generated so as to continue the celebration of the Eucharist. Through the ordination of priests—Holy Orders—those who officiate at the Eucharist are ordained and empowered. It is not a surprise, therefore, that the Catholic Church all over the world celebrates most of the sacramental life of her members in the context of the Eucharist. This sub-section will be devoted to examining the Eucharistic celebrations of the sacraments of marriage (Holy Matrimony) and ordination (Holy Orders) so as to explain the elements that constitute inculturation in their celebration. I begin with marriage.

8.6.1 Eucharistic Celebration of Marriage and Its Anniversaries

The Eucharist is the source and summit of our life as Catholics. It is the center of every Catholic activity. As one of the sacraments of the Church, marriage is also celebrated within the context of the Eucharist. This section seeks to examine in what sense the Eucharistic celebration of marriage presents an occasion for inculturation and also how it has been inculturated in Mutare diocese up to this day. In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, John Paul II (1995:47-48) emphasizes this element of inculturation thus:

Not only did the Synod speak of inculturation, but it also made use of it, taking the Church as God’s family as its guiding idea for . . . evangelization in Africa. The Synod Fathers acknowledged it as an expression of the Church’s nature particularly appropriate for Africa. This image emphasizes care for others, solidarity, warmth and human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust.

Marriage in Zimbabwe, and among African people generally, is not seen as an exclusive affair of a man and his wife. Instead, it is understood as a binding force for two families and their extended families, a force through which life is generated. Healey and Sybertz
emphasize the bond marriage brings to the couple’s families in these words: “African [Shona] marriage is not just a contract between two individuals; it is a bond or covenant between two families. All the members of the extended families work together for the married couples.” This bond which unites the two families constitutes an element of inculturation during the occasion of marriage in Mutare diocese.

In preparations and celebration of marriage, Shona culture gives the aunts a prominent place. During a Church wedding at Mass, the aunt is the one who hands the bride to the bridegroom in these words: “Mutumbi wenyu uyu, tinokupai mukadzi wenyu nhasi” (see Order of Celebrating the Sacrament of Matrimony, 1964:6-7). This means: “Here is your wife, we give her to you today.” The aunt does not say ‘I’, but ‘we.’ This reflects the solidarity of the family, expressed to the man and his wife. This marriage handover is done in accordance with Shona culture and custom at Mass in all the parishes of the diocese, in order to show that the two families support the Church wedding. Another element of inculturation in marriage which is practiced in some parishes is the place of an elder and the function he performs in Shona culture. Because of his age, wisdom and integrity, he is regarded as an ancestor. For example, when the aunt hands the bride to the groom, the elder gives them brief advice. On the other hand, a more practical and detailed function of the elder is implemented in a more cultural way in a neighboring diocese—Hwange. Describing the role which an elder plays in a Christian marriage, Rumuma (1996:41) highlights the cultural symbolism of such a celebration in these words:

After the homily from the priest, an elder then addresses the couple stressing more the noble traditional value of marriage. The wife to be sits on a mat and the bridegroom on a stool for the advisor to address them. The couple then as a sign of responding to the word, and to show their willingness to live by it, exchange appropriate symbols. The bride presents to the man a dish of water symbolizing love and service, while the man might present a bankbook, again symbolizing his love and service.

This aspect of inculturation is very significant because it brings out the cultural values that will remain fresh in the minds of the newly wedded couple. The presentation of a dish containing water not only symbolizes service; it also represents water as a source of
life and an element of purification. When a man and his wife sit down to listen to the elder, it also shows the respect elders command in Shona culture. It further shows how ready the couple is to listen with great attention to the elder’s words of advice.

Cultural values such as the presentation of symbolic gifts and the services of an elder at marriage are elements that constitute inculturation in Mutare diocese. In addition to the inculturation of marriage in the context of Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese, the inculturated wedding ceremony in Hwange diocese can greatly help the Catholics of Mutare diocese by encouraging them to re-live their cultural values, which are often forgotten or neglected. If the couple live joyfully and reach their twenty-fifth year wedding anniversary, they are encouraged to renew their commitment in a Christian ceremony called jubilee. This offers them another joyful day in their married life to express their love more profoundly during another Eucharistic celebration. However, the jubilee celebration of married couples has not been emphasized nor inculturated in our diocese. It will be interesting to note when evaluation is done in chapter nine, the reasons given why wedding jubilees are not emphasized in Mutare diocese. Ordination to the ministry represents a different occasion for inculturation from that of marriage.

8.6.2 Eucharistic Celebration of Ordination

The aim of this section is to show how the ordination of priests in the Catholic Church is another occasion for inculturation and also to describe some of the attempts which have been made to inculturate its celebration within the context of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. I will do so by highlighting the common features of ordination, explaining how their corresponding symbols constitute elements of inculturation and describing the attempts made to inculturate this form of Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese. In the process of explaining the elements that constitute inculturation in the Eucharistic celebration of ordination, I intend also to demonstrate how the present celebration of ordination involving local and indigenous Shona priests differs from the Church traditional, uninculturated ordination ceremony. The focus will be mainly on the gestures and symbols that characterize the celebration of ordination in Mutare diocese.
Canons 1008 and 1009 explain in full the meaning and functions of a priest. It states:

By divine institution some among Christ’s faithful are, through the sacramental order, marked with the indelible character and are thus constituted sacred ministers; thereby they are consecrated and deputed so that, each according to his own grade, they fulfill, in the person of Christ the Head, offices of teaching, sanctifying and ruling, and so they nourish the people of God.

Canon 1009 concludes by specifying the types of orders and the mode of ordination in these words:

The orders are the episcopate, the priesthood and the deaconate. They are conferred by the imposition of hands and the prayer of consecration, which the liturgical books prescribed for each grade.

Canons 1008 and 1009 not only spell out the nature and function of the priest, but they also state that it is by the imposition of hands and the prayers of consecration that a priest is ordained. New Testament passages such as Acts 6:6; 13:1-3; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6, mention the imposition of hands as the main characteristic feature of ordination. This shows that the priesthood, especially in the Catholic Church, goes with an ordination that takes place at Mass. For an ordination ceremony to be meaningful to Africans in general and Shona Catholics in particular, it must be inculturated. I examine a few examples from some African countries in order to find out how gestures and symbols used in ordination constitute elements of inculturation.

The ordination rite from the Kasai community in Zaire is replete with cultural values of togetherness and solidarity. During the Mass of ordination, the parents of the new priest are allowed to express their mind about their son’s intention to be ordained a Catholic priest. Lumbalala (1998:92) records the parents’ speech that is well rooted in their cultural values: In the presence of the Bishop they declare:

This man… is our flesh and blood. His commitment is also our own. We give him wholeheartedly to the Church. We will stand by him. But watch him well, assure him good conditions for work. Surround him with affection and solicitude. We have done our work. It is up to you to do yours now.

Turning toward their son, the parents give him the white kaolin saying to him:

The insect that destroyed the bean is inside it. We who brought you into the world have never betrayed you. We will continue to struggle at your side. Here is the lime; we are with you.

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With these words from the parents, the bishop affirms the choice of the ordinand in these words: “We choose you for the order of the priest” (Lumbalala, 1998:92). When the congregation applauds, expressing its joy for the choice of its son and relative, the bishop continues with the rest of the ordination rite. The gestures and symbols used in the Kasai rite make ordination an element of inculturation because they bring out fully the essence of African culture. In the case of the Kasai community, the initiation rite is implied and the importance of proverbs is well emphasized.

The priestly ordination in Mutare diocese follows almost a similar pattern, especially when parents accompany their son to the bishop. This is a sign of togetherness and solidarity. However, it differs from the Kasai community because the parents do not say anything before the bishop. But when the bishop—an elder—addresses the ordinand, the young man sits on a mat with his feet crossed on the ground—which is very symbolic in Shona culture—as a gesture of humility and respect. This posture taken by the candidate is significant in Shona culture because an elder always deserves respect. These gestures and symbols from Shona culture make the Eucharistic celebration of ordination an occasion for inculturation. They bring out the essence of Shona culture which was not allowed to feature during the colonial missionary era. The inculturated ordination rite in both Kasai and Shona cultures, respectively, differ from the traditional Catholic ceremony of ordination during the colonial era.

After twenty-five years of serving his people in Mutare diocese, the priest emerges again from his people to thank God for choosing him to be a priest as well as to thank his people for supporting him in his pilgrimage. The people, in turn, are happy to recall how he has served them by interceding for them, encouraging them, and enkindling the fire of the hearth. This jubilee Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese becomes an occasion to recall how the priest and his people have re-lived the cultural values of togetherness and solidarity. In short, it shows the value of mutual support. This is also an element of inculturation. In Mutare diocese, priests and bishops that have reached twenty-five years of ordained life have all celebrated their jubilee in a Eucharistic celebration either on a
parish or at diocesan level. At this particular jubilee Mass, gifts which have cultural significance are presented. For example, gifts depicting the status of ‘sekuru’ (elder) as well as gifts reflecting recognition of service are also presented to the jubilarian.

In all the elements of inculturation I have explained, as they apply to Mutare diocese, participation by the people is integral. Participation is also enhanced, encouraged and promoted in a visible way in smaller groups, where everyone is well known and where everyone’s talents are easily discovered and properly made use of through service. The way in which the smaller groups help to foster or promote inculturation in Mutare diocese is through participation. Participation is emphasized because, in the words of McHenry (1995:231), “if there is one word more evocative of African wisdom, it is participation”. I examine the smaller groups in the Catholic diocese of Mutare to show how this participation, which is an element of inculturation, is encouraged and practiced.

8.7 Inculturation and Eucharistic Celebration in Smaller Groups

An examination of some of the smaller groups in Mutare diocese will help to show how their participation in Eucharistic celebrations also constitutes an occasion for inculturation. Since inculturation is dynamic and cultures differ, activities that constitute aspects of inculturation are also numerous. It is not proper, therefore, to limit discussions on inculturation to a few activities or areas of human existence. In order to show this dynamic aspect of inculturation and the richness of Shona culture, I discuss below the smaller groups in Mutare diocese, highlighting the participatory roles they play which contribute to the process of inculturation. The advice from Vatican II under Apostolicam Actuositate 1966, No 11, is quite relevant in this context: “To attain the ends of their apostolate more easily it can be of advantage for families to organize themselves into smaller groups.” These smaller groups, in Africa, are rooted in the African extended family.
In these smaller groups we observe some distinctive cultural characteristics that go with Eucharistic celebrations. The words of Gittins (2000:77) on identity will provide a background to this discussion: “Since meaning and meaning-making are critical aspects of a group’s identity, they are highly significant in the process of acculturation. Each group, while perhaps wishing to understand the other, also needs to retain its identity and integrity.” This statement is important because people are easily swallowed up in a big crowd. It is in small groups that people are known better and have ample opportunities to participate freely and to the best of their abilities in group activities. In order to encourage pastoral care for these smaller groups, the Vatican II, under *Sacrosanctum Concillium* (SC 1966:142), emphasizes:

Smaller groups can also be the objects of pastoral care. The aim is not to create a separate, privileged class, but hopefully to deepen and intensify the Christian life of a group, in keeping with their needs and their stage of development. It achieves this by taking advantage of the opportunities which emanate from a common spiritual or apostolic commitment and from the desire for mutual edification.

In the African family system, everybody is cared for and each person’s needs are considered. This is what Vatican II is encouraging so as to promote not only participation but also to enable people to have a sense of belonging in the family of God. Based on these fundamental criteria of African culture, we consider these smaller groups as subjects of inculturation in the celebration of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. In his article, ‘Inculturation through small Christian communities,’ Ugeux’s observation (1995:140) serves as a point of departure:

As far as planned inculturation is concerned, the function of small Christian communities is to serve as partners or as privileged areas of experiment, rather than as initiators. But they are the natural locus of spontaneous inculturation in the Church and in society at large.

Three groups to be examined in three different sub-sections include children, women and men. The reason for the encouragement of these groups in Mutare diocese is to promote active participation in the life of the Catholic Church especially at Mass.
8.7.1 Elements of Inculturation in the Childrens’ Mass

During the Western missionary era, Zimbabwean children were not given proper attention at Mass. If we follow African culture, especially the ‘extended family system,’ where every member of the family is important and has to be valued and cared for, then children at Mass also deserve that recognition and care. Jesus himself, in Mark 10:14, says: “Let little children come to me; do not stop them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs”. The English name by which the childrens’ group is known in our diocese is ‘missionary childhood’. In Shona it is called ‘inzanga/chita chevana’. The missionary childhood was established in Zimbabwe between 1987 and 1999. In 1999, it was well established in most of the parishes in Mutare diocese.

The Childrens’ group is made up of boys and girls under thirteen years old. As their English name suggests, it is necessary to get these children well rooted in both Christian and Shona cultures so as to make them committed, practicing Catholics in Mutare diocese, children who will be leaders and missionaries to Africa in future. The aspect of inculturation to be emphasized in this and subsequent sub-sections is active participation, where the children demonstrate some Shona cultural values at Mass. Ugeux (1995:137) brings out the contribution which participation in smaller groups makes to inculturation in these lines: “Such living communities are very effective for bringing about inculturation because the small number of members involved makes it possible for everybody to participate.” It is important to encourage participation at Mass during early childhood. The presence of this group of children is felt in almost all the parishes in the diocese but more in those Eucharistic celebrations occurring at diocesan level, for example, in Eucharistic celebrations of ordination and at the diocesan centenary, and so on. In any of these Masses in Mutare diocese, the presence of this smaller group is characterized by displays of traditional cultural values. Traditional cultural dancing, singing and active participation at their own Masses as well as at important parish Eucharistic celebrations are the elements of inculturation that characterize this group.
The fact that these children take active part at Mass, where they demonstrate the importance of Shona culture, makes their participation relevant to inculturation. In the first place, in those parishes in Mutare diocese where there are separate Masses for children, the Masses are for all children in that parish. At that Mass which is meant for them, they take full responsibility of all the activities. For example, it is interesting to hear the type of advice they give themselves when sharing the word of God. However, children are encouraged to join the ‘inzanga/chita chevana because the guild makes them more active, more participatory and more culturally inclined in the Catholic set up. This is where the difference between the guild and the rest of the children lies.

The children in this guild have their cultural attire that they put on at Masses, unlike the rest of the children who come to Mass with their daily outfit. In some parishes in Mutare diocese, most of the children belong to this guild and it is interesting to watch them perform at Masses. By singing, they make the Eucharistic celebration lively and by dancing in the cultural manner, they promote their culture and honor God with it. This active participation at Mass in the context of Shona culture brings to the fore the essence of inculturation. To summarize the essence of inculturation in the words of Arrupe (see Toward a Theology of Inculturation 1997:11), it means: “The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context.” In other words, the Eucharistic life of the Catholic Church as witnessed by these little children is incarnated into Shona culture through language and gestures. “Cardwell (1973:5) summarizes the importance of participation thus:

One way of fulfilling the childrens’ need to worship in a way appropriate to them is to give them the experience of sharing in Masses which are theirs—Masses which they have helped to prepare, in which they take an active part, responsible part, Masses in which the prayers and readings are adapted to the childrens’ experience and understanding. In this way, the children may be helped to become more open to the presence of God in their lives; more capable of recognizing God at work in their community, more ready to respond happily by a life of loving service.

Cardwell’s suggestion is very important because it encourages participation, which helps the children to develop self confidence. When these children participate actively to
promote their culture, Christianity is equally taking root in their lives. Since they celebrate and understand the Eucharist in their own language, Christianity takes root in their culture. When they grow in such a committed manner, where they are taught at their early age to love and appreciate their culture, they will not deviate from such principle and practice. This is inculturation and it is important in our diocese because these children will become fathers and mothers in future, who will help to promote inculturation in the Church and its Eucharistic celebration.

8.7.2 Elements of Inculturation in the Women’s Mass

Other smaller groups in Mutare diocese are guilds of Christian women. The name preferred is ‘smaller groups’, though they have the same characteristics as ‘small Christian communities.’ In order to emphasize the roles these smaller groups play in the inculturation process, Magesa (2004:53), quoting Bishop Kilaini, has this to say: “The first and the basic effort of inculturation is the Small Christian Communities (SCCs). They are the basis of inculturation. They help the Gospel to be part and parcel of people’s lives.” I now examine the Eucharistic celebration in these guilds to show how it provides for them an occasion for inculturation in Mutare diocese. The emphasis is on the Eucharistic celebration in these specific smaller groups. There are five societies/guilds that exist in Mutare diocese but only one originates from our diocese. They are:

Mary of Mount Carmel       Maria weGomo Kamero
Legion of Mary             Pfumo reMaria
Queen of Heaven           Hosi yeDenga
St. Anne                   Mbuya Anna/Anna Musande
Sacred Heart of Jesus      Mwoyo musande waJesu

While the guilds of the Legion of Mary, Queen of Heaven and Sacred Heart of Jesus have international characteristics because they originated from Europe, those of St. Anne and Mary of Mount Carmel are local. St. Anne started in Gweru diocese, while Mary of
Mount Carmel originated from Mutare diocese at the inspiration of bishop Lamont—a Carmelite.

The aspects of inculturation that feature at the women’s Mass are their way of participating and of sharing the word of God, which is through story telling. By participation, they become involved in the preparation of the Mass and this makes them knowledgeable of the parts of the Mass as well as committed Catholics. From the beginning of the celebration, they join in the procession, sing the parts of the Mass and also do the readings of the day. Participation is an aspect of inculturation as Ugeux (1995:137) rightly admits: “Such living communities are very effective for bringing about inculturation because the small number of members involved makes it possible for everybody to participate.” Furthermore, participation is an aspect of inculturation because it is a way these smaller groups manifest their culture as Catholics. They are also very much aware of what they do in the sense that the Eucharistic celebration is now integrated into their culture. Through story telling when sharing the word of God, they reflect their culture and make the message of the day more meaningful. Story telling conveys the Gospel message just as the parables conveyed Jesus’ teachings to his disciples. Story telling is an important characteristic of the African mode of communication. It is a treasured Shona cultural heritage which is full of meaning. In his book, ‘Growing up in Shona Society’, Gelfand (1959:86-87) highlights the importance of story telling thus:

Mkanganwi (1973) has given us a first hand account of the story telling [ngano] through which the Shona child learns Shona feelings, language, morality and aspirations. The telling of tales is not always a simple recitation of monotonous detail. Sometimes it is told in the form of song or embellished by action… During the tale she [the grandmother] may indicate by gesture to her listeners when to participate or similarly members of the audience may motion to the others to interrupt with song… Story telling is an oral art and the written story fails to portray the vital human aspects of ngano so evident in the expressiveness, facial expression, gesture and use of dramatic pause by the teller of tales.

The above narrative portrays not only the importance of story telling in its cultural context, it also highlights some important Shona cultural values that are elements of inculturation. Story telling, therefore, is an aspect of Shona culture and it is important that
these smaller groups make proper use of it during Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese.

Another aspect of inculturation is the unity that exists among the five different guilds. This unity is important to Eucharistic inculturation because the Eucharist is a symbol of unity. The unity that exists among the various women’s guilds is in line with the Shona proverb that says “kubatana isimba” that is, unity is strength. This kind of unity is necessary for inculturation because, in the words of Chupungco (1989:28), “it [inculturation] touches everything that touches on the relationship between God and his people…” Though each guild requests Masses for specific purposes, such as the commemoration of the feast of their Patron saint, all the guilds gather from time to time to celebrate together as a sign of unity that has its root in ‘African communalism.’ In order to stress the communal aspect in African tradition and custom, which also promotes unity, Mringi (1995:198) has this to say: “The African traditional system is basically communalistic, that is, … society in which the welfare of the individual is bound up with the welfare of all people in the community.” Like the Eucharist that is a symbol of unity, the women’s guilds in Mutare diocese encourage unity not only among themselves, but also among Catholics and among various families as a whole in the diocese.

The Mass they celebrate once a week as a body strengthens and unites them for the various works they undertake. In their weekly Mass celebrated in Shona, they sing, share, and present gifts in a procession. Story telling and the use of proverbs characterize the sharing of the word of God at their own Mass. In their separate groups, they get to know others better and to encourage one another in their participation. Secondly, when there is a wedding or funeral they are all together. During nyaradzo (condolence) Mass, for example, they gather as one family and the consoling words come mainly from the Bible and from cultural experiences. Their presence has been a source of strength in Mutare diocese through solidarity as well as through helping to promote their culture through encouragement. Their work is not limited to their groups. They also help to take care of the church premises and the presbytery as a whole. They play an important role in
teaching catechism to the young ones as well as to adults who are catechumens. On Sunday Eucharistic celebrations, the women’s guilds help to maintain order in the Church. The unity they foster is very essential in inculturation because Shona culture reflects unity through extended families. Many of them are an inspiration to their families, including their husbands.

8.7.3 Elements of Inculturation in the Men’s Mass

In this sub-section, I examine the Mass meant for men in the Catholic Church in Mutare to show how it is a reflection of inculturation in the diocese. The aim is also to show how men in the congregation, through their guild—chita chaJosefa—are encouraged to be active participants at Mass as well as to assume their responsibilities in the diocese. The inculturation of the Eucharist in the Catholic diocese of Mutare requires that men in the congregation, as in any Shona family, should be given an opportunity to perform their duties in the extended family of God. They perform these duties as members of Chita chaJosefa. In some cases, it must be pointed out at the onset, men are slow to be involved in Church related activities. In the research on small Christian communities in Mutare diocese, Igboanyika (2002:45) makes an important observation on mens’ involvement in Church. In his report on ‘building Small Christian Communities in Africa,’ he writes:

The above observations show that religious small groups that attract female participants may not be necessarily appealing to male population. This does not mean that men are by no means interested in religious-related small groups. The problem centers rather on the kind of activities and roles in which men are involved when they participate in these groups.

Igboayika’s observation is pertinent in our discussion of inculturation as it concerns men and their participation in Mutare diocese. Men participate in activities which are of significance to them, where they are fully involved, and which also have cultural relevance. In Mutare diocese, St. Joseph, the husband of Mary, is chosen as the patron saint of the society of men in the Church. That is why their guild is called ‘chita chaJosefa. That is, ‘the guild of St. Joseph.’ Associating their guild with an ideal father
of the family is of significance to them. As Joseph was the head of the family at Nazareth, these men are regarded as heads of the family of God in their different parishes. Like every head in the African traditional family, where the father offers prayers, members of Chita chaJosefa assume also various roles in the diocese.

Concerning the role the head of the family in the African traditional set up performs, Arinze (1970:24-25) observes: “[Morning prayer] is said by the father of the family as soon as he wakes up in the family [home]… Then he makes petitions for himself, his family, his kindred and his property.” The role the members of Chita chaJosefa play as protectors of their various families is extended to the Church, where they not only pray with the other members of the congregation, but they also assume the responsibility of guiding and protecting it. The role which the members of Chita chaJosefa perform, especially during Mass, contributes to inculturation in Mutare diocese. They are given the role as head of the family by Christ, the overall Head of the Church. They now assume the responsibility of the head of the family at Masses on Sundays. As members of Chita chaJosefa, they have come to identify fully with the diocese, where they render their services promptly and generously at Masses.

Some young men are joining the guild, which previously was regarded as the guild for old men. There is a gradual attempt to inculturate this smaller group in Mutare diocese. Their presence at parish and diocesan Eucharistic celebrations is well recognized. They have a uniformed sash similar to the priests’ stole, which they hang over their shoulders during Masses. As pillars in their various natural families, they are also accorded that honor to be the pillars in the family of God so as to enable Christianity to be culturally rooted in Mutare diocese. It is from their group that those regarded as ‘elders’ are sanctioned to exercise cultural duties. At diocesan Eucharistic celebration, for example, they have the privilege to come in front of the congregation, to stoop down and, with cupped hands, to applaud in order to greet the bishop, who is known as ‘sekuru.’ We can say that all the members of these smaller groups, in this regard especially the members of

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Chita chaJosefa, are bearers of Shona cultural values, and thus serve as inculturating agents in the Church in Mutare.

The Church in Mutare diocese is for all groups of people. That is, it is for men, women and children just as the African family is for all. As the Eucharist is a symbol of unity, these smaller groups reflect this unity in their various groups and as a unit in the whole diocese. The cultural aspect that features in these smaller groups is the image of an extended family. Just as every Shona family is regarded as a unit with the father as the head, in the same way, the family of God in Mutare diocese is united with Christ as the overall Head. The participation at Masses, the image of a family, the solidarity and the unity that characterize these smaller groups make them fundamentally agents of inculturation. They are very essential in our Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese.

8.8 Conclusion

This chapter has tried to examine those elements and subjects that contribute to inculturation in relation to the Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese and the occasions that make them possible. There was a brief review of the definition of inculturation to help provide a proper focus for the chapter. Some aspects of inculturation were listed for discussion, including enthronement, dancing, participation, role of an African family, symbolic languages, gestures, invocation of ancestors, use of local staple food and others. A systematic procedure was followed to explain how these elements constitute inculturation in Mutare diocese as well as how they relate to the Eucharist. These aspects of inculturation were examined under two primary parts of the Mass, namely the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. In the course of the discussion, efforts were made to point out how the present practice of inculturation departed from the traditional Catholic way of celebrating the Eucharist. It was discovered that these elements of inculturation, which differed from the traditional way of celebration, have brought more awareness about the Eucharist and they have also increased participation. The role which traditional culture plays in religious worship became prominent and significant.
Some important solemnities like Christmas and Easter were also examined so as to show how the Eucharistic celebrations in them reflect areas of inculturation, especially in the diocese of Mutare. Reference was made to some other countries in Africa to see how our diocese can benefit from their inculturation attempts in enriching our own celebrations. It was necessary to make reference to these African countries because not much on Eucharistic inculturation has been written in Mutare diocese. I also examined the Eucharistic celebration of some joyful moments in our Christian life, as well as the celebration in smaller groups. In these smaller groups, forms of participation as aspects of inculturation were outstanding. They gave their members a sense of belonging.

In the various aspects of Eucharistic celebration, it was discovered that symbols and gestures not only make celebrations meaningful, but they also make them interesting and lively. It was necessary to examine these aspects of human life because inculturation is not built in space. Eucharistic inculturation is for the people who celebrate the Eucharist. Therefore, any successful Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese must touch the lives of the people who celebrate the Eucharist. This explains why, in addition to Sunday Eucharistic celebrations, we also considered the inculturation of the Eucharistic celebrations of the two solemnities, the joyful moments in peoples’ lives and the participation of smaller groups as important aspects of inculturation in Mutare diocese. Since inculturation is an ongoing process that involves implementation and practice, it needs to be evaluated in order to determine if the process is on the right track and also to determine the extent of progress made in its implementation. This will be the area of concentration in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 9

IN CULTURATED EUCHARISTIC CELEBRATION IN MUTARE DIOCESE: INTERPRETATION AND EVALUATION

9.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the opinions of Catholics in Mutare diocese on the inculturation of the Eucharist, which some of them celebrate daily and others do so only on Sundays. The review is based on the analysis and interpretation of responses to questionnaires that were sent to Catholics in Mutare diocese. Among those who received the questionnaires were also children, who are valued and considered as full members of the Zimbabwean family. Face to face oral interviews were also conducted with different individuals and their accounts are also considered in this chapter.

The relationship between questionnaires and oral interviews in this research is clearly brought out in this statement: “The interviews can be used either as a substitute or a supplement to a questionnaire in data collection. The interview can be seen as an oral questionnaire or a process of extracting research data” (see Mhlanga & Madziyire 1994:61). In other words, oral interviews are important in this chapter because they were used to augment the information gathered from questionnaires. They also have the capacity to make elaborate explanations on the questionnaire responses with concrete and practical examples. It is equally important to emphasize that cultural values have different meanings to different societies. We are here concerned with the meanings which cultural values have for the Shona Catholics in Mutare. This explains why those interviewed were all Catholics in the diocese.

In addition to reviewing questionnaire responses and the accounts of the interviews, the various inculturation attempts in the celebration of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese are also evaluated. It is through the evaluation process that the success of attempts at inculturation will emerge. Where such attempts have been minimal, suggestions will be
made for improvements. It must be emphasized that cultures differ and societies have different ways of interpreting their own cultural meanings and this is also applicable to the Shona people and their culture. The ultimate goal of the questionnaires and oral interviews is to determine how Mutare Catholics understand and appreciate the integration of the Eucharistic celebration into Shona culture specifically.

This chapter, in effect, represents the mind of Catholics in Mutare diocese. It is unique in this study because it is practical and, therefore, central to the whole research. While the previous chapters focused on the theoretical aspects of the meaning and challenges of inculturation and the various types of Eucharistic celebration, this chapter represents the inculturated Eucharist as it is celebrated in Mutare diocese. Furthermore, although it is Mutare diocese that benefits from current inculturation efforts, when inculturation has been fully implemented and practiced in Mutare, both the regional and universal Church will also benefit, since all belong to the same body of Christ.

As already seen in chapter 8, there are twenty-four parishes in Mutare diocese. Sixteen of these parishes were involved in the data collection. Out of a hundred and sixty questionnaires sent out to adult Catholics, one hundred and fifty-two or 95% were returned. Of the ninety-six questionnaires sent to Catholic children, eighty or 83.33% were returned. Sixteen priests also received questionnaires and all of them responded, representing 100% of responses from this group. The questionnaires consisted of twenty questions for adult Catholics, fourteen for priests and ten for the children. In most of the questions for the adults and the priests, the ‘matrix’ method was used. Matrix questions are used when several questions with the same set of response categories are asked. They offer respondents freedom to choose between a number of options such as: ‘strongly agree,’ ‘agree,’ ‘undecided,’ ‘disagree,’ and ‘strongly disagree.’ On the other hand, the childrens’ questions were formulated with mainly ‘yes’ or ‘no’ options.
The figures or number of those who were asked to respond to the questionnaires are considered representative for the following reasons. In the first place, two thirds or 67% of the parishes were used for data collection. They consisted of sixteen parishes from urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Eleven of these parishes were rural, three were semi-urban and only two were urban or city parishes. Actual tables containing the raw figures and their percentages are included in appendices at the end of this study. Chiwawa (2003:364) explains the meaning of ‘raw’ thus: “Information before it is arranged and analyzed is called raw data. It is ‘raw’ because it is unprocessed by statistical methods.”

In the interpretation of the data collected, the responses from the respondents were considered. The remark made by Tarasikirwa et al (2004:328) explains the importance of data analysis and interpretation in these lines:

> The aim of data analysis is to reduce and synthesize information—to ‘make sense’ out of it—and to allow inferences about the populations. The aim of interpretation is to combine the results of data analysis with value statements, criteria, and standards in order to produce conclusions, judgments and recommendations.

The use of questionnaires and interviews is quite important in a study of this nature in Mutare diocese. First and foremost, they provide first hand information from the people directly affected. Secondly not much has been written on the subject of Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese. The only work available at present in this diocese was written by Chiromba. In his study, entitled *The Mystery of the Most Holy Eucharist in the Shona Cultural Situation*, Chiromba (1988:5) refers to the goal of the fourth chapter of his study in this way: “Today, theology dialogues with the cultures. We therefore make theology dialogue with the Shona culture in the third part of our work, for the benefit of those Shona Christians who are born, live, believe and die within that culture.” I join Chiromba in echoing the same sentiment, that is, the hope that this research will benefit Catholics in Mutare diocese. Hence, it is necessary to obtain first hand information from them. With this background, I proceed to present the opinions of Catholics in Mutare. These opinions, as already indicated, reflect the progress made so far in the inculturation of the Eucharist and help to highlight some of the problems and obstacles encountered in the process.
The overall evaluation will determine what needs to be done in future and make suggestions about where necessary help could be sought. The procedure of the chapter will be first to analyze and interpret the kinds of religious activities that take place during Eucharistic celebrations, followed by the evaluation of these activities. They will be grouped into three types, namely, celebrations, active participation and the expression of cultural values. The review of the peoples’ opinions begins with the inculturation of the word of God, with particular reference to the enthronement ritual.

9.2 The Word of God

The Word of God occupies a prominent place in the Catholic Eucharistic celebrations. Any attempt to inculturate it in order to encourage Catholics to read and understand it, as well as to make good use of it, is a worthy cause. The following sub-sections review how this important aspect of the Eucharistic celebration is inculturated in Mutare diocese.

9.2.1 Enthronement of the Scriptures (Bible)

In chapter 8, I examined enthronement as one of the aspects of the Mass that has been inculturated in Mutare diocese. ‘Enthronement’, as the word is used in this study, refers to the practice of ceremoniously conveying the Bible to the lectern with dignity and respect. In this subsection, I review the opinions of Mutare Catholics on enthronement, emphasizing how it has helped them to understand and celebrate the ‘Word of God’ more meaningfully at Mass.

The three groups referred to above—adult Catholics, priests and children—were asked questions on the necessity and frequency of enthronement of the Bible in Eucharistic celebrations at their various parishes. The figures are represented first while their corresponding percentages are in brackets. In their responses on the necessity of enthronement, 148 (97.37%) of the adults, 76 (95%) of the children and 14 (91.30%) of the priests affirmed its necessity. On the other hand, 121 (87.22%) of the adults and 12 (78.40%) of priests confirmed that they are happy with the frequency with which
enthronement is practiced in their parishes. Explaining how enthronement affects inculturation in Mutare diocese in the oral interview on 21/01/2007, Mr. Muvodzi remarked: “Just as every chief in Shona culture who is installed and enthroned in his ‘Kraal’, with authority to govern his people, just as he commands respect and his subjects listen to and also obey him, in the same way the Bible is enthroned with dignity so that it will be proclaimed with respect. Truly, enthronement enables Catholics in Mutare diocese to listen to the Word of God attentively.”

Enthroning the Bible in accordance with Shona culture also means that Christianity is taking root in this culture. This means that, in this way, the celebration of the word of God at Mass has been integrated into Shona culture in the context of enthronement. As soon as a chief is installed and enthroned, he commands respect and his subjects listen to and obey him. In the same way, enthronement inspires the Catholics in Mutare diocese to listen to the word of God attentively. Concerning the role enthronement plays in the promotion of inculturation in the diocese, and in addition to the figures given above, Mr. Gutuza, in an oral interview on 20/01/2006, commented that “dancing, gestures and other body expressions in the process of enthronement portray the beauty of Shona culture.” Seeing enthronement as a necessary occasion for inculturation, he concluded: “Enthronement is necessary because it brings a change in the method of celebration and also gives the Bible its rightful place in the Church’s Eucharistic life. It appeals to people because it draws their attention and disposes them to listen to the word of God [when it is] read at Mass.” One possible way of introducing the practice of enthronement in all the parishes of the diocese is its regular practice especially in those ceremonies that bring the whole diocese together. Seeing enthronement celebrated regularly in the diocese will encourage those parishes that have not yet started its practice to understand its value and to follow suit. (see Photo on Enthronement) This page consists of pictures.
9.2.2 Hearing and Understanding the Word of God

In Shona culture, as well as in any other African and other cultures, listening attentively is a mark of respect to the speaker. When an elder is speaking, for example, the demand for attention is great because elders are regarded as people of great wisdom that must be explored as inestimable treasure. It is because of this respect, which is accorded to an elder in Shona culture, especially when he is talking, that I consider a discussion of attentive listening to the word of God during the Eucharistic celebration as very important in this section.

The emphasis on the importance of understanding the word of God at Mass is necessary because of the central place this ‘Word’ occupies in the celebration of the Eucharist, and also because Christ emphasized the importance of understanding it in his teaching. Those who do not understand are compared to the seeds that fell by the way side. In Matthew 13:18, Jesus declares: “When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path.” Those who understand, Jesus describes thus in Matthew 13:23: “But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruits…” In his advice on the importance of listening to the Word of God, Rosage (2005:133) has this to say: “In the liturgy of the Word, Jesus himself speaks to us. There is power in his Word to mold and transform our hearts if we but listen. The Father, too, invites us to listen.” The Word of God serves not only to nourish spiritually those who hear and understand it, but also transforms their lives. I now analyze those activities in Mutare diocese that encourage listening and understanding the word as a way of promoting Eucharistic inculturation.

In order to encourage attentive listening and facilitate understanding, the three readings are done in the Shona language. The proper posture for the members of the congregation is sitting. Reflecting on the importance of sitting down, Uzukwu (1982:62) comments: “During the reading of the Gospel, all remain seated; this is a requisite attitude for receiving and assimilating an important message…” Since Christ is regarded as the
greatest elder, his words must be read with respect, listened to attentively with the aim of proper understanding. The understanding of the Word of God is very important for it to be meaningful to its hearers, thereby transforming their lives. As stated in the first paragraph of this chapter, the role oral interviews play is to supplement or augment the responses received from questionnaires. The answers from the interviewees follow the trends of the questionnaires as directed by the main themes of the thesis. Such themes as adequate preparation and blessing of readers, reading audibly with repetition of first and second readings and others, were integrated into the questionnaires. It follows, therefore, that the interviewee(s) that gave more practical explanations in a particular theme were quoted. Below are given some of the illustrations from these interviewees, beginning with Mrs. Nyamutswa.

Commenting on the inculturation process in Mutare to facilitate proper disposition for the word of God, Mrs. Nyamutswa, in an oral interview on 20/01/2006, had this to say: “The blessing, which the readers receive from the priest or chief celebrant, is empowering and strengthening. It makes the readers feel that they are fully empowered to carry out the duty assigned to them. That is, they appreciate the role they perform for the congregation as readers” Mrs. Nyamutswa’s comment agrees with Ndiokwere’s analysis on this part in the Zairean Mass. In an analysis on the word of God in the Zairean Mass, Ndiokwere (1994b:161) reports:

> Before each reading of the lesson, the readers bow before the priests and ask for blessing. Whoever reads the word of God within the assembly of God’s people can only do it with the accreditation of the one who presides in the name of Christ. Having received the blessing from the priest the reader shows his [her] appreciation through some gesture.

In Mutare diocese, instead of bowing as practiced in some cultures or other places in the Catholic Church, the readers kneel down for the blessing from the chief celebrant. In other words, though the religious gestures are almost the same everywhere, they convey different meanings to different members of the Catholic Church that use them and Mutare Catholics are not exceptions. The analysis of these religious activities center on how they are understood, practiced, and appreciated by Catholics in Mutare diocese.
It must be emphasized that whatever encourages participation and meaningful celebration of the Eucharist enhances inculturation. Inculturating the word of God will not be fruitful and completely successful if the people do not understand what the Good News means for them. Being aware of the importance of listening and understanding the Word of God, St Paul in Romans 10:17 declares: “So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes from the word of Christ.” The faith that comes from the word of God helps to transform the lives of the people as well as to build up the local Church.

Questions were designed to find out how people understand the word of God and what facilitates that understanding. According to some respondents, repeating some of the Sunday readings helps to facilitate the understanding of the word of God. While 85 (56%) of adults and 41 (51.25%) of the children said they understand the Word of God better when it is read more than once, 67 (44%) of adults and 39 (48.75%) of children maintained that they understand the Word of God when it is read the first time. On the other hand, a total of 7 (44%) priests agreed that they allow and encourage a repeat of Sunday readings. That is, they permit Sunday readings to be read more than once in their parishes during Sunday Eucharistic celebrations. Considering the percentages of those who said they understand the readings when they are read more than once—85 (56%) of the adults and 41 (51.25%) of the children, respectively--it becomes necessary that the Sunday readings should be repeated as often as possible or interpreted effectively to improve understanding. This is an area where Catholic priests in Mutare diocese are challenged to help their parishioners understand the Word of God better.

In a list showing emphasis on African culture and language in terms of proper communication, Chupungco (1989:91) recalls: “The Zairean Bishops assure us… that a great effort was exerted to incorporate into the original text the traits of the African language, namely its sonority, its inclination to repeat words, and its facility to use images…” The Zairean Bishops are right to highlight those linguistic traits in African languages and cultures that are necessary in the Eucharistic inculturation. If the Zairean Bishops acknowledged the importance of repeating some ‘important words’ at
Eucharistic celebrations, it could also be helpful in Mutare to give this practice—repeating first and second readings—a trial.

Taking African custom as an example, those who make announcements in rural areas repeat the same message several times from one point or village to another. At the end of the announcement, the announcer asks ‘have you all heard what the message is saying?’ For the Word of God to be meaningful to the people, it must be announced in such a way that it must be heard and understood by all present. Just as the village announcers go from one village square to another announcing and repeating a particular message, and ending up asking whether the message has been understood, in the same way the Church in Mutare diocese must borrow from such a method or cultural practice in order to enrich its Eucharistic celebrations. In other words, any method that enhances listening and understanding of the Word of God must be encouraged and used. This is also because our late Pope John Paul II (2005:26) insists: “Listening to the Word of God is the most important thing in our lives.”

Another method that enhances the understanding of the Word of God is through sharing among the members of the community. A question was addressed to the priests to find out whether they permitted their parishioners to share the word of God among themselves. While 12 (75.81%) priests allowed their parishioners to share the Word of God, especially after the second reading on Sundays, 4 (24.19%) of them did not allow that practice. This is called ‘sharing the Word of God’, as opposed to the homily given by priests. People are gifted in different ways in the sharing of the Word of God. While some members in the worshipping community are gifted in story telling, for example, some others have the ability to put the message across in a more convincing manner.

These gifts are all from God for the good of the Church and they must be harnessed and used for the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation. Those who are storytellers can easily create stories that remain vivid in the minds of others. The priest alone may not be able to
bring out all these qualities. The peoples’ sharing complements the priest’s homily. It is important to allow the people to take part in the sharing of the word of God because it builds trust and confidence in their lives since it gives them a sense of belonging in that community or parish. Inculturation encourages sharing in the spirit of African family and cultural values. Though gradual efforts to facilitate the understanding of the Word of God in Mutare diocese in the manner described are currently taking place, there is need for more aggressive efforts and attempts to be made because the Word of God is very important in the life of every Catholic in the diocese. Every effort made to encourage its understanding by the people is highly recommended.

9.2.3 Importance of Proverbs in Preaching the Word of God

Both the priests and the adults Catholics responded positively and with very high percentages to the question on the necessity of using proverbs in communicating the Word of God to the people. For example, a total of 143 (97.3%) of the adults and 15 (94%) of the priests affirmed the necessity of using proverbs in preaching. In most African cultures, for example, people use proverbs when they talk among themselves. The importance of proverbs is well explicated in this Nigerian proverb that says: “Proverb is the palm oil with which words are eaten.” Generally, proverbs are not explained. They carry the message with its meaning straight to the audience.

In the introduction of their book, ‘Towards an African Narrative Theology,’ Healey and Sybertz (1996:13) record two African proverbs that are important to this subsection. They state: “One who sees something good must narrate it, Ganda (Uganda) proverbs.” “A river is enlarged by its tributaries, Kikuyu (Kenya); Swahili (East Africa) proverb.” The first proverb is in line with the idea of communicating the Word of God—Good News—to Catholics in Mutare through sharing. The Good News of the Kingdom of God is that ‘good thing’ that must be ‘narrated’ and it is done through the use of proverbs. The second proverb is in line with the idea of making use of different human resources and talents in various parishes so that the Word of God may grow and be rooted in the
This is a way of promoting inculturation. John Paul II (1995:46) has an excellent synthesis of the Word of God, of incarnation and inculturation, in these lines:

This emptying of self, this *kenosis* necessary for exaltation, which is the way of Christ and of each of his disciples (cf. Phil. 2:6-9), sheds light on the encounter of cultures with Christ and his Gospel. ‘Every culture needs to be transformed by the Gospel values in the light of the Paschal Mystery’… Just as the Word of God became like us in everything but sin, so too, the inculturation of the Good News takes on all authentic human values purifying them from sin and restoring [to] them their full meaning.

The people in Mutare diocese need the Word of God very much in their lives and this has to be communicated to them in a way or manner that makes it more meaningful to understand. The high percentage of responses from adult Catholics and priest confirmed the importance of using Shona proverbs in communicating the Word of God. While those interviewed—eight of them—agreed on the importance of using proverbs during preaching, for example, they suggested other possible ways and means that could facilitate effective communication of the Word of God at Eucharistic celebrations in Mutare diocese.

In order to find out other different ways to enhance communication and understanding of the Word of God, the opinions and suggestions of other Catholics were also sought through face-to-face oral interviews. In such an oral interview with Mr. Takarinda on (20/01/06), he was of the opinion that: “the use of interesting stories in addition to the use of proverbs enhances the understanding of the Word of God.” In order to facilitate communication, preaching must be done in the language of the people. While 13 (81.30%) of the priests use Shona language at Eucharistic celebrations, 3 (18.70%) of them use Shona and English combined. The use of the local language is necessary in the implementation of inculturation and this is very much encouraged. In some parishes, a mixture of Shona and English is used for the benefit of few whites and other Shona people who prefer to have some changes from time to time. The important issue here is that the Word of God is communicated to the majority in the language they understand. At the same time, the benefit of the minority is also taken care of because all the members of the congregation belong to the ‘one family of God.’
The above discussion has centered on the Word of God and how it has been inculcated during Eucharistic celebrations in Mutare diocese. Cultural values, as shown time and again in the preceding account, are also central in the inculcation of the Eucharist and I now turn to comments given on them in the questionnaires and interviews.

9.3 Cultural Values

It is important to mention from the beginning of this section that the culture of a people manifests itself in different aspects of life, no matter how simple these manifestations may appear. In terms of inculcation, it is not proper to neglect any cultural value on the grounds that it is very simple. It is also important to note that the extent to which people react to culture differs, even among the subjects of the same culture. The focus here is on Shona cultural values and how Mutare Catholics appreciate them. Describing how generations react differently to their culture, Onwubiko (1991:x) has this to say:

It sometimes happens that one generation comes to revere the cultural values of its community. Another arrives to cover [them] with debris; yet another comes to uncover them. It may still be left to another generation to recover them. This is because cultural values have resilient qualities the totality of which cannot be comprehended by one generation, nor exhausted by the history of its interaction with and reaction to other cultures.

This section is important to this chapter and to the whole thesis because it deals directly with what touches the Catholics in Mutare as far as faith and culture are concerned. Shona cultural values and the Catholic faith are taken into consideration in the questionnaire design. The purpose of the following suggestions is to examine how the Catholic Church in Mutare appreciates these important cultural values and how it tries to integrate its Eucharistic celebration into them.

9.3.1 Importance of Applause and Hand-clapping during Eucharistic Celebration

Following Shona culture, there are different ways of applauding at different times during Eucharistic celebration. Before the Mass starts, the elder invites both the men and women
to welcome the Bishop when he is present for the Mass. Men start applauding in the form of hand-clapping, followed by women. At the end of this ritual, the elder asks the parish priest to request the Bishop to celebrate the Mass for the congregation. During official ceremonies, if the Bishop is not there the elder welcomes the chief celebrant, with or without applause, and requests him to celebrate the Mass for the people. Other times when the applause is observed or omitted are during the elevation of the consecrated Host and Chalice and at the end of the Mass. But the slight clapping of hands in appreciation—not applause—before receiving Holy Communion is always observed. The questionnaire centers on this last mentioned gesture.

Question 11 in the questionnaire given to the adults tried to find out the cultural significance of clapping hands lightly before receiving Holy Communion. A total of 142 (96.86%) agreed that this has a cultural significance of appreciation among Shona Catholics. It is a wise decision to integrate the Eucharistic celebration into this aspect of Shona culture because Catholics in Mutare are happy to promote their culture in their Eucharistic celebration. With a high percentage of 73 (91.25%), the children also confirmed that this kind of gesture is a cultural way of expressing appreciation or gratitude. This explains why a child is taught at an early age to clap hands in this way before receiving any gift from someone. Gelfand (1959:9) describes how a toddler learns this important cultural practice thus:

As soon as a child can walk, if not before, it is taught the first steps in etiquette. First comes hand clapping (kuuchira), the sign of gratitude for anything given to it. If it does not respond correctly its mother tantalizes it by holding up the desired object but refusing to part with it until the child claps hands.

This rich cultural value is also practiced at Eucharistic celebration to show how the Catholics in the diocese appreciate the ‘spiritual gift’—the Body and Blood of Christ they receive. The implication of this cultural practice is that by thus clapping hands before receiving Holy Communion, the Catholics in Mutare diocese attest that what they receive is a precious gift of Christ himself and not something foreign to them. As a precious gift, they treasure it with deep appreciation.
A questionnaire was designed to find out from children whom they thank when they clap hands at Communion. It is interesting to note how they distributed their responses. The majority of them, 62 (77.50%), said they clap hands in order to thank Christ, whom they receive at Communion. While 14 (17.50%) of them said they thank Christ and the priest, only 4 (5%) of them said they thank the priest only. The children’s responses are reasonable because they are able to acknowledge Christ as the giver of his body and blood. They also appreciate the services of the priest who helps them to know about Christ in the Holy Eucharist. From this discussion, it is reasonable to affirm that the gesture of lightly clapping hands at Eucharistic celebration is a way of inculturation and it helps the Catholics in Mutare diocese to celebrate the Eucharist with a deep sense of gratitude and appreciation in the context of Shona culture.

9.3.2 Eucharistic Celebration in the Context of the African Family

In recognition of the role the family plays in the Church and in society, Pope John Paul II (1995:66) has this to say: “The Christian families in Africa will … become true ‘domestic churches,’ contributing to society’s progress towards a more fraternal life. This is how African societies will be transformed through the Gospel.” The accent here is on becoming true ‘domestic churches.’ The Catholic Church in Mutare, being a domestic Church, manifests itself as a ‘family of God’ and this is known as an extended family in African culture. In order to determine how this notion of ‘extended family’ is lived and practiced in Mutare diocese, efforts were made to find out from the people how they regard the gathering on Sundays to celebrate the Eucharist.

In their responses, 133 (78%) of the adult Catholics agreed that the Sunday Eucharistic celebration is a family gathering and celebration. In order to correlate the questionnaire responses of the people with regard to ‘Sunday gathering as a family,’ eight people were interviewed. Two of those interviewed are quoted here verbatim. In an oral interview with Mr. Lekani on 21/01/06, on the issue of gathering on Sunday as a family, he expressed his opinion thus: “In my family, we go to Mass on Sundays as one family. When different families come to Church with the same idea, it becomes easy to relate
well as one extended family in a larger family. This helps to know those families that are not there so that other family members will visit them after Mass.” Mr. Lekani’s explanation touches the essential points of this discussion because he highlights and emphasizes the importance of the African extended family, where everyone is cared for and appreciated.

Mrs. Lekani, in turn, observed on the same day of the interview: “Gathering together as an extended family, especially on Sundays, helps us [Catholic women] to know ourselves as mothers. It makes it possible for us to render help to our needy members as our Shona culture requires.” In the responses from Mr. and Mrs. Lekani an extended family relationship is involved, thereby confirming what Healey and Sybertz (1996:107) narrate:

African emphasis on personal relationships is closely related to family values. African family values are inclusive. Whether people are members of the immediate family or the extended family or close friends or even visitors, everyone participates in the family relationships and friendships.

This kind of relationship among Catholics in Mutare was not emphasized at Sunday Eucharistic celebration during the missionary era because the foreign missionaries did not understand fully well the importance of the extended family system among the Shona people. The African extended family system rejects Cain’s response: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Gen. 4:9). As a model of a family, the Church must take care of all her children and try to encourage them to grow in every aspect of life.

Responding to the question on the meaning of a handshake at Mass, a total of 145 (98.24%) adults said that the handshake at Mass brings out the Shona cultural understanding of acceptance, friendship and peace. This explains why during the time of the ‘kiss of peace’ or ‘sign of peace,’ people take a long time to go round to greet one another at Mass, including children. An outsider attending Shona Mass for the first time might think that the people are wasting time. This is where the understanding of peoples’ cultures is important. It is not good to condemn peoples’ way of life without trying to understand it. The Eucharist signifies peace and when the congregants shake hands, the
action signifies acceptance, peace and unity. Thus, the shaking of hands at Mass is a way of expressing the peace and unity that exist among Catholics. Peace and unity bring progress in society and Church.

9.3.3 The Use of Staple Food at Mass

In chapter three I established the fact that unleavened bread and wine from grapes which are currently used at Mass, are different types of foodstuff from the main local staple food and drink in Zimbabwe. In chapter eight I argued that local staple food and drink are possible elements of inculturation. Questions were designed to find out from the priests and Catholics in Mutare diocese their opinions on the use of local staple food for Eucharistic celebrations as a means of inculturating the Eucharist. There is need to emphasize the importance of using local staple food at Mass because Christ, the giver of the Eucharist, celebrated the first Eucharist at the last Supper with elements characteristic of Jewish culture. Such an example from Christ, it was argued, must be continued.

Both the priests and the adult Catholics, answering their questions separately, disapproved of the introduction of local staple food and drink at Mass. For example, 12 (51.72%) priests and 124 (62.33%) adult Catholics disapproved of the use of local staple food at Mass. In order to find out the reasons for this disapproval, oral interviews were conducted. Those interviewed gave various reasons, most of which centered on the need for a better explanation of the significance of the use of local staple food. The opinions of five of those interviewed are presented here. Mr. Gutuza, interviewed on 20/01/06, commented: “This issue needs more explanation. Let us leave it for the priests and bishops for the moment.” Mr. Takarinda, interviewed on the same day but at a different place, expressed ‘fear’ about the bulkiness of the local food but he quickly concluded: “It is better if our people get to know more about the implications of its use at Mass”. Some women expressed their own opinions as well on the issue.
Mrs. Nyamutswa, interviewed on 19/01/06, was concerned about the storage of the food in view of possible ‘infections like cholera’. Mrs. Nyangani, also interviewed on 19/01/06, thought that the use of staple food was possible “if it is prepared in a more decent manner, especially this time [when] wheat flour is very expensive in the country”. Responding more elaborately, Mr. Muvodzi, interviewed on 21/01/06, remarked: “For the time being it is not possible until later, when inculturation is deeply rooted in the Church and among our people so that they become aware of the symbol of bread that comes from our own staple food.” In addition, Mrs. Nyangani questioned what would happen when an outsider who did not eat our staple food joined us at Mass. Four priests involved in an ordinary conversation laid more stress on the unity of the Church, which they said was signified by the present unleavened bread. Some of them questioned the rationale behind doing something differently. In other words, while there is a significant lack of understanding among a good number of Catholics in Mutare on the nature of the staple food to be used, there is also the tendency among priests to maintain the status quo.

Two issues coalesce from the responses given by the people. The first and most important is the need to prepare the people very well to understand the nature of the staple food that is to be used. Magesa (2004:29) records how this lack of understanding was expressed thus: “Sr. Mumbua noted that a lack of understanding of what it means to inculturate, [and] the failure of the Church to create awareness of inculturation in its members, … have also been great hindrances to inculturation.” Proper preparation of the people is necessary because some of them think that the staple food to be used will take the form of ‘sadza’—the final stage of preparing mealie/maize-meal before it is eaten by Shona people. In this awareness campaign, people should be made to understand that bread could be made from maize to resemble the bread we use now at Mass. Secondly, there is an aspect of maintaining the status quo, especially among priests who hide under the cover of ‘unity of the Church.’ I must add here that the emphasis should be on ‘unity in diversity.’
The fact that some people have rejected the idea of using local staple food at Mass does not nullify the need for inculturation attempts. Instead, it is the beginning of the awareness campaign, which progresses gradually. The first approach in this awareness campaign is to make the people realize the importance of accepting what is theirs; in this way outsiders will also acknowledge it. For example, when the Catholics of Mutare diocese start celebrating Mass with the local staple food and drink, visitors outside the Shona culture will respect their culture and join them to partake of that bread that comes from their own local staple food. The second step will be the preparation of the local food so that it becomes light and durable. As Onwubiko earlier predicted, some time later generations will recover forgotten culture and then start to use it. In the same way, the Catholics in Mutare diocese will one day appreciate their staple food and start to use it at the celebration of the Mass. The groundwork for this experiment has already begun and it must continue till it matures into full practice.

9.3.4 Invocation of African Ancestors at Mass

The priests alone were asked questions about the necessity of invoking African ancestors at Mass as an aspect of inculturation. Their responses were conflicting. This is because one third of them, which is almost 33.33% of them, agreed, while the same number disagreed and the remaining number was undecided. It was not a surprise to the researcher to receive such conflicting responses because academic research on Eucharistic inculturation in general and the importance of ancestors in particular is yet to be intensified in the diocese. With the establishments of the ‘Catholic University,’ the ‘Jesuits Arrupe College’ and the already existing ‘Major Seminary’, all in Harare, there is hope that more research work on inculturation will take place. Such Catholic institutions in Nigeria, South Africa and Zaire, will always be of great help in terms of the training of Zimbabwean personnel in areas of systematic theology and liturgical inculturation.

In order to help the priests to appreciate the significance of invoking African ancestors at Mass in Mutare diocese, there is need for them to be more frequently exposed to inculturated Masses such as the Zairean Mass. Secondly, priests are to be encouraged to
take up research on inculturation relating to the place of ancestors in Eucharistic celebration. Since inculturation is not forced on people, it means that in Mutare diocese the invocation of ancestors at Mass is not yet officially implemented. The appropriate time in the Church’s liturgical calendar to begin the practice of invocation of ancestors is on November 2, when the Catholic Church celebrates the feast all souls. There is still hope for this to happen, however, because the one third of priests who support the idea will, one-day, certainly conscientize others into accepting the invocation of ancestors at Mass. It must be stressed again that the reason for rejecting this idea could be partly the lack of proper exposure of the diocesan priests, in particular, to this kind of practice, and partly the desire to maintain a status quo.

9.3.5 Matatenda

*Matatenda* is a ‘Shona’ word for ‘harvest thanksgiving,’ when Catholics bring the crops they produced in their land to Church in order to offer them to God. The essence of this thanksgiving is the realization among Catholics that God, who blessed them with abundant fruits from their land, is a generous God who must be thanked. The *matatenda* day is unique in the sense that it is a joyful day meant for the offering of fruits, crops and seeds produced locally and in a cultural way. It is a day of thanksgiving and also a day acknowledging the material and cultural riches of the place. In the past, when the foreign missionaries were using gifts to win converts, there was no attention given to harvest thanksgiving--*matatenda*. With inculturation in vogue, where self-reliance is stressed, the word *matatenda* becomes meaningful to the people in Mutare diocese.

A question was designed to find out from the adult Catholics what their understanding of *matatenda* is. A total of 129 (93.53%) respondents agreed that *matatenda* has Shona cultural relevance. In other words, a very high percentage representation of adult Catholics responded that *matatenda* offered them the opportunity to express culturally their appreciation to God for all the blessings they received during the year. In order to express this appreciation at Mass, the singing of hymns in the Shona language, dancing and other gestures are characteristics of Shona culture. The gifts are brought to the altar
in a joyful mood. It means that the Eucharistic celebration of the day is not only integrated into Shona culture, but it is also enriched by these cultural values.

This annual celebration is culturally significant. In the first place, before the planting season begins, there is a special Sunday for praying for rain. Later, women bring seeds for planting to be blessed in the Church. At harvest, afterward, people happily bring their produce to Church as a way of thanking God who gave them such abundant food. It is important to note that most people rarely miss Mass on matatenda day. This day is also characterized by feasting—eating and drinking in the spirit of one family. Matatenda Sunday in Mutare diocese, therefore, is not only an interesting occasion; but it is also remarkable because of the cultural value it signifies (see photos below).
9.3.6 Thanksgiving at Mass

In chapter seven I discussed the Eucharist as thanksgiving. In preparation for chapter nine a question was designed to find out whether Catholics understood the Eucharist in this way, as thanksgiving. It is interesting to note that 85 (66.41%) of respondents affirmed that they know very well that the Eucharist is ‘thanksgiving.’ This fact helps to encourage Catholics in Mutare to appreciate, in a cultural sense, the gift of the Eucharist in the diocese. Those who do not know this need to be educated by those of them that know better. In an oral interview with Mr. Muvodzi, on 21/01/06, he explained his understanding of ‘thanksgiving’ at Mass thus: “Mass is a thanksgiving to God for the gift of Christ, whose body and blood we receive in the Eucharist.” In order to explain this better, he continued: “The Shona culture is replete with expressions of thanksgiving and as Shona Catholics, we show this appreciation at Mass in an outstanding way.”

In another oral interview with Mrs. Nyangani on, 19/01/06, she mentioned two ways of showing her understanding of the Eucharist as thanksgiving, In addition to what Mr. Muvodzi said, this is what she said: “If you listen to the prayers of the faithful, ‘mikumbiro’, which our people make on Sundays, they are full of thanksgiving: thanking God for the opportunity to be alive, to be at Mass, and for other blessings from God. At the end of Mass, we do not leave until we have thanked God for his gifts at Mass and we express this in our Shona cultural way of appreciation by clapping hands.” This is a convincing explanation of appreciation derived from Shona culture.

The implication here is that most Catholics in Mutare diocese do not go to Mass on Sundays merely to fulfill an obligation. Those who understand the Mass as thanksgiving go there to be with the Lord who has been very good to them. The understanding of the Eucharist as thanksgiving also helps Catholics to be more devoted and more convinced in their participation at Mass. This understanding is important especially now that inculturation encourages active participation at Mass. In other words, when people realize what God has done for them, they thank him and they do so by participating actively at Eucharistic celebration.
9.4 Celebration with Smaller Groups

In chapter eight it was established that smaller groups or small Christian communities are very important in building strong Christianity in Africa. The Eucharistic celebrations in these smaller groups also serve as occasions of inculturation in Mutare diocese. To begin with, the observation of Ugeux (1995:140) is important in this analysis:

As far as planned inculturation is concerned, the function of small Christian communities is to serve as partners or as privileged areas of experiment, rather than as initiators. But they are the natural locus of spontaneous inculturation in the Church and in society.

The emphasis is on the spontaneity with which these smaller groups help to promote inculturation. This they do by way of participation, through which they bring out the essential aspects of Shona culture. This spontaneity manifests itself naturally when the smaller groups celebrate the Eucharist by themselves. When they celebrate with others in the parish or diocese, they enrich the larger community. In order to enable them to celebrate meaningfully, it is important to inculturate whatever helps them in their celebration. The focus in this sub-section is on the frequency of Masses celebrated for these smaller groups and the active participation of their members.

Questions were designed to find out the frequency of separate Masses celebrated for men in the congregation and for the children. It was discovered that in Mutare diocese, these two groups did not have regular separate Masses. For example, eight priests said they celebrated Masses once in a while for the men, while five said they had never celebrated such Masses for them. For the children, four priests admitted that they celebrated once in a while, but seven said they had never done so. The primary reason given is that the number of priests in Mutare diocese is so small that they could not celebrate regular separate Masses for children and for men in the congregation.

A few parishes do celebrate separate Masses for children on certain Sundays. When children have their separate Mass, there is every possibility to use the childrens’ Eucharistic prayer, which has been composed for them. Few priests, though, make use of
this Eucharistic prayer. In African culture, there are special means of teaching children. In Mutare diocese separate Masses are celebrated for Christian women of different societies on ordinary weekdays. These separate Masses bring women together and enable them to participate actively in the service. The need to have a separate Mass for the men is also necessary because it will, hopefully, enable them to improve their church attendance, their involvement in church-related matters as well as in active participation at Mass.

9.4.1 Active Participation

An instruction from Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC 1966 No. 12) of Vatican II reads: “It should be made clear that all who gather for the Eucharist constitute that Holy people which, together with the ministers, plays its part in the sacred action.” Article 30 of Sacrosanctum Concilium gives a definite instruction on how to encourage participation thus: “To promote active participation, the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamation, responses, psalms, antiphons, hymns, as well as by actions, gestures and bodily attitudes”. The emphasis is on ‘active participation’. Based on the responses from his interviews on activities that facilitate inculturation, Magesa (2004:88) observes: “In the Catholic Church, many Christians seem more to be spectators than participants in their church”.

Playing the role of ‘spectators’ at Mass does not promote inculturation. Conversely, ‘participation’ does so significantly. That is why Chupungco (1992:86) maintains that: “participation is the third principle governing inculturation”. In other words, efforts must be made to encourage participation in order to enhance inculturation. A total of 14 (91.04%) respondents from the priests affirmed that there is active participation by people at Mass in this order: 5 (37.31%) very active and 9 (53.73%) active participation. The adults themselves, together with the children, score themselves very highly in participation at Mass. For example, 70 (54.52%) of the adult Catholics agreed that they participated very actively and 52 (32.40%) agreed to simple participation. This totaled 122 (86.92%) in endorsement of participation. The rate for childrens’ participation is 58
(72.50%) for very active and 20 (25%) for active participation, respectively. This brings their total in participation to 78 (97.50%). Judging from activities such as singing, reading, offertory procession, and others that take place on Sundays, it is evident that there is participation on the part of both the adults and the children. One hundred and forty-one (97.51%) adults agreed that singing in the Shona language made the celebration of Mass lively and encouraged participation. Recognizing the role music plays in Africa, Chibiko (2001:9) remarks: “In Africa, every festivity is accompanied by music even though the type of music varies from one celebration to the other and will only be considered good music when it gives the celebration the grandeur the latter deserves.”

This description is true of Shona music, which has been well inculturated into the Eucharistic celebration in the diocese. Shona hymns attract worshippers to participate in singing and hand-clapping. The prayer of the faithful, offertory collection and bringing of gifts are some of the moments when people participate very actively. Participation at Mass includes partaking of the body and blood of Christ. Though the number of those receiving Holy Communion continues to increase, yet many do not receive because of some church restrictions which have not been resolved over the years. I have observed in an earlier chapter that in African culture, when it is time for meals everybody joins in. When people gather for sacrifice, all take part to eat the meat of the sacrificed animal. I conclude this sub-section with this important observation by Cooke (2004:106), who observes:

Because the sense of the sacredness of this reception of the Lord grew stronger and especially meaningful to each Christian who received Communion, there was a tendency to stress this individual aspect of the action, with the consequent loss of any social significance. The social meaning—that this is primarily an action of sharing with others—was largely forgotten. Still today, it is not very widely understood that the reception of the Eucharistic bread and wine is something that Christians at Eucharist are meant to share with one another. They are a community because they come into union with the same Lord; he relates to them as individuals but he also relates to them as a group.

Cooke’s observation is important because it not only highlights the social dimension of the Eucharistic celebration, but it also implies the necessity of participation. For this
participation to be realized, Catholics at the Eucharistic celebration must be encouraged and one of the ways of doing so is through sharing at Communion. This is another area where inculturation is challenged.

9.5 Solemnities

It is also appropriate to consider the two great solemnities of the Catholic Church, Christmas and Easter, so as to find out whether they, too, have been inculturated in Mutare diocese or not. Two questions were designed to find out the extent of inculturation that has taken place at the celebrations of Christmas and Easter, respectively. Of these, question 14 states that ‘the celebration of Christmas is yet to assume the Shona cultural way of celebrating the birth of a Zimbabwean child. That is, does the way Christmas is celebrated in Mutare reflect the Shona cultural way of celebrating the birth of a child? The followings represent the adults’ responses: strongly agree 36 (34.82%), agree 51 (39.46%), undecided 18 (10.44%), disagree 32 (12.38%) and strongly disagree 15 (02.90%). In other words, 87 (74.28%) of respondents agreed that Christmas celebration in Mutare diocese does not reflect the cultural way of celebrating the birth of a Shona child. In order to find out what must be done to inculturate Christmas, eight people were interviewed. They all gave suggestions on how Christmas celebration could be made to resemble the celebration of the birth of a child in Shona culture. These people, though interviewed separately, proffered similar suggestions, ranging from ululation to feasting, from eating and drinking to the presentation of gifts.

The followings are examples of the main suggestions made by some of those interviewed. In an oral interview on 20/01/06, Mr. Takarinda explained: “In African culture, among the Shona people for example, the celebration is called makombora. It refers to a time when a child is born and people come to congratulate the family of that child. The people come with gifts and the family of the child prepares a meal to feed them—that is, feasting. This kind of practice could be introduced at Mass on Christmas day.” In order to emphasize the significance of the gift of the new child, Mr. Muvodzi, interviewed on 21/01/06, had this to say:
The birth of the first-born child takes place at the home of the woman’s parents. In order to strike a balance between the two families, there is *makonde*—signifying congratulations, thanksgiving. The two families meet at the woman’s home to eat. This feast lasts for seven days, after which the mother and the child are taken to the man’s house for another feasting. In the course of the feasting, people present their gifts. The Mass we celebrate on Christmas day would be more meaningful if it can take this form."

The emphasis is on the importance of celebrating as families or as a family. In other words, the Catholic Church in Mutare must assume the role of a responsible family in order to bring together the extended families for this important celebration.

Two women interviewed also echoed similar sentiments. Mrs. Nyamutswa, interviewed on 19/01/06, suggested:

"Those children born on Christmas day in our diocese should be announced in the parishes where their parents worship. A second collection could be made on their behalf as gifts from the Church. In Shona culture, gifts are presented to the parents of newly born children. To make this culture real among Catholics, those children born on Christmas day deserve these gifts. During the prayer of the faithful, their names should be mentioned and prayed for. This will encourage families to participate more in that Christmas Mass."

These are some of the challenges to inculturation. The Bible records how the three wise men (Magi) presented their gifts to the Savior. In the same way, something reflecting the presentation of gifts to a child will be symbolic in our attempt to inculturate the celebration of Christmas in Mutare diocese.

A question was designed to find out whether Easter celebration also has any cultural significance among Shona Catholics. While 83 (73.93%) of the adults said that it has no cultural significance, 58 (19.84%) said it has, and 11 (06.72%) were undecided. Those who said there was cultural significance in the Easter celebration had Good Friday celebration in mind. All the eight interviewed acknowledged the efforts made so far in introducing activities with cultural values in the celebration of Good Friday. However, they suggested that these efforts must be made more practical. At the same time, the interviewees were of the opinion that there is still much to be done to inculturate the
Eucharistic celebration on the vigil (Easter Saturday night) and Easter Sunday Masses. For concrete inculturation to take place, six of those interviewed suggested that an in-depth study of the type of celebration that will be of cultural significance be made. From these responses and suggestions received, it is obvious that more efforts are needed for proper inculturation of these two solemnities to take place because they are very important to the Catholic faith.

9.6 Joyful Moments

It is important to repeat with emphasis that inculturation is both a dynamic and gradual process. This sub-section is concerned with inculturating the Eucharistic celebration in which sacraments such as marriage and ordination are conferred on people. These two sacraments are chosen because, through marriage, for example, physical life is generated. Through priestly ministry that stems from ordination, spiritual regeneration is aimed at. These sacraments are celebrated in the context of the Mass. It is that Mass that needs inculturation.

A total of 141 (96.36%) responses from the adult Catholics agreed that reasonable efforts have been made to inculturate the Eucharistic celebration of these two ceremonies—that is, marriage and ordination. Mr. Gutuza, in an oral interview on 20/01/06, explains: “Through such inculturation in our diocese, the priestly ordination, for example, has become not only meaningful but also practical. It also encourages and promotes priestly vocations.” On the other hand, responses show that though it is good to celebrate wedding jubilee anniversaries, they are not yet celebrated in our diocese. For example, eight Catholics interviewed on the need to celebrate wedding jubilees with Mass agreed that it was the right thing to do, though many have not been converted to this idea yet.

The reasons given why people should celebrate their wedding jubilee anniversaries could be summarized thus: First, celebration in the context of the Mass helps to encourage couples to remain faithful and loving servants of each other in the presence of God. The
celebration also helps to reduce divorce cases among Christians. When new couples see how some married people have stayed married together for up to twenty-five or fifty years respectively, they are encouraged also to try to build up their marriage to last as long.

Secondly, celebrating a wedding jubilee anniversary enables the couple and the celebrating priest to discover new ways of inculturating such anniversaries. On the other hand, two reasons were given why people do not celebrate their wedding jubilee anniversaries with a Holy Mass. The first is financial constraint and the second is lack of appreciation of its importance. The need for continued in-depth catechesis in this regard is very important because Catholics in Mutare need to know and appreciate the importance of jubilee celebrations. The priests have come to a stage where they always celebrate their priestly anniversaries with some amount of inculturation.

(See photos of Wedding and Priestly Ordinations)
The analysis and interpretation of responses given above makes possible an overall understanding of how inculturation of the Eucharist can be implemented in Mutare diocese. This inculturation is multi-faceted and it is meant to encourage peoples’ participation in Eucharistic celebrations. Based on the responses analyzed and interpreted in the preceding sections, it is possible also to make an evaluation of the state of Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese.

9.7 Evaluation of Inculturated Areas in Eucharistic Celebration

One of the primary aims of evaluation is to determine the degree to which a programme, a project or a practice has been effective and how successful it has been in providing the services and benefits envisioned. Mhlanga & Madziyire (2004:26) explain in these lines why evaluation is undertaken: “Evaluations are undertaken to influence the actions and the activities of individuals or groups who have, or are presumed to have, an opportunity to tailor their actions on the basis of the results of the evaluation effort.” The emphasis here is on the ability to influence the actions of those who have the “opportunity to tailor their actions on the basis of the results of the evaluation”. It is hoped that the results of the present research will not end on paper but will, instead, help Mutare diocese to intensify its efforts in the inculturation of the Eucharist. This is precisely the aim of this sub-section on evaluation. The focus of this evaluation is on celebration, participation and the application of cultural values to Eucharistic celebration. Since the evaluation is based on the analysis of the responses discussed in the preceding sections, it is not my intention to repeat or restate the figures and their percentages, except where this is absolutely necessary.

9.7.1 Eucharistic Celebration

It has become clear by now that the Eucharist becomes more meaningful when it is celebrated in the context of a particular culture. By celebration of the Eucharist I mean that act of worship that involves the priest and the members of the congregation, using their cultural values, gestures and symbols to praise and thank God not only for God’s providence, but also for the gift of Christ in the two species of bread and wine.
This sub-section evaluates the Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese to determine the extent to which inculturation has taken place in it. It must be stated at the onset that the percentages already given in the previous sections are not to be repeated in this evaluation section except in one or two areas for purposes of emphasis. While I consider the celebration of the Eucharist as a whole, the emphasis will be more on the participation of smaller groups in the celebration. This is because through these smaller groups, sometimes called small ‘Christian Communities,’ a strong and solid Church often emerges.

Looking at Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese in general, it is reasonable to affirm that there is a remarkable effort to inculturate the word of God in it through the enthronement of the Bible, through preaching, as well as through frequent Sunday celebrations. The more new ways of inculturating the Eucharist are discovered and the more attention given to Christians in smaller groups, it seems, the stronger the diocese will become and the deeper the Christian message will penetrate into Shona culture. Furthermore, it is by making these smaller groups strong and solid that the parishes will become alive and active. When parishes are alive and active, the diocese will become not only strong in its practice of Christianity, but will also become an ideal in the implementation of inculturation.

The celebration of solemnities and joyful moments in their inculturated forms need more effort. This is because the two solemnities discussed are very important to the Church and their celebrations need to be rooted in Shona culture. When the Masses marking the two solemnities are celebrated in the context of Shona culture, they become more meaningful to Catholics in Mutare diocese. In the same way, the Eucharistic celebrations of marriage and priestly ordination need to be fully inculturated to enable the recipients not only to appreciate their vocations but also to be fully active members of the Church.
9.7.2 Participation

In African culture, every member of the family takes part in the affairs of the family. In order to determine how this cultural trait is integrated into the Eucharistic celebration among Shona Catholics in Mutare, it is important to evaluate how Catholics are encouraged to participate at Mass. The percentages of responses on participation in various activities like singing and sharing the word of God is good. However, there is need for much improvement in active participation. For example, it is only from children that we have very active participation 58 (72.50%), followed by the adults 70 (54.52%), while only 5 priests (37.31%) thought that there was very active participation from their parishioners. In other words, the priests in Mutare diocese must continuously encourage their parishioners if the highest level of active participation is to be attained.

On the other hand, the percentage in the reception of Holy Communion is not high enough for meaningful inculturation to take place. In order to find out whether the practice where some adult Catholics receive Holy Communion while others do not is in accordance with Shona traditional way of life, 86 (72.16%) of the adults disagreed. In other words, such a practice is in conflict with the Shona cultural way of life. For inculturation to be fully successful, the Catholics in Mutare diocese must participate fully and actively not only in other aspects of the Eucharistic celebration but also in the reception of Holy Communion. There is need, therefore, to improve the over-all participation of Catholics in Eucharistic celebrations in the diocese of Mutare. This means, more people are to be enabled to receive Holy Communion by the church’s relaxation of most of its restrictive laws, such as those regarding marriage. As a gradual process, inculturation will continue to permeate into the Church through her members. In order to reflect a true Shona Catholic Church within the universal Church, active participation of Catholics in any given Eucharistic celebration is necessary. Shona culture must become the basis for Eucharistic inculturation, thus enhancing active participation by Catholics at Mass.
9.7.3 Application of Cultural Values in Eucharistic Celebration

The evaluation here focuses primarily on the use of the vernacular—Shona language and Shona music—in Eucharistic celebration. This applies to activities such as singing, hand clapping, and the use of proverbs. Other considered practices include *matatenda*, as well as paying more attention to the use of local staple food, the family, and the invocation of African ancestors.

There is continuous progress in the inculturation of those areas that involve the use of the vernacular language and music. On the other hand, there is no inculturation at all relating to both the use of local staple food and the invocation of African ancestors. Generally, it could be said that the application of cultural values in the Eucharistic celebration in Mutare diocese is good, though the two outstanding areas referred to lack complete inculturation, and they are of great concern. It is here that Mutare diocese needs the help of other African countries, especially Zaire, where the Zairean Mass is fully inculturated and approved by the Vatican authority. There is much that Mutare diocese can learn from other countries as well, especially those of East and West Africa. The pie chart below represents the over-all evaluation of the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese.
Percentages Showing Inculturated and None Inculturated Areas in Eucharistic Celebration in Mutare Diocese.

Key:
1) Sky Blue—areas where cultural values are applied.
2) Purple—included area in the celebration of the word of God
3) Yellow—inclusion facilitating participation
4) Green—non-inculturated areas.

9.8 Conclusion
This chapter has tried to discover, through the responses of various groups of the congregation to questionnaires and to interview questions, the extent of inculturation that has taken place in the Catholic Church in Mutare diocese. The information used in the chapter came from sixteen parishes out of twenty-four in the diocese.
The responses obtained from priests, young and adult Catholics were analyzed, interpreted, and evaluated. The analysis involved the enthronement of the book of Gospels, understanding the Word of God, use of proverbs in preaching, the application of cultural values with its components, among others. Analysis and interpretation of areas like solemnities, smaller groups and joyful moments were also made. The interpretation of data was based on the responses to questions posed and the figures with percentages showing these responses were given. The tables containing the questions, their responses and their percentages, as well as the questions for oral interviews, are found in the appendix section.

The evaluation of the process and extent of inculturation was based on three major areas, namely celebration, participation and the application of cultural values. In a few cases in this evaluation process the percentages of the analysis were given—specifying either areas of agreement or disagreement. The evaluation on the three major areas is summed up with a pie chart showing the percentage representations of inculturated and non-inculturated areas. In the analysis, it was discovered that inculturation is all-embracing. Consequently, in addition to activities on Sundays, other important areas such as solemnities, joyful moments and participation of smaller groups were also considered. Since inculturation is all-embracing, it follows a gradual process. This means that the areas that currently lack inculturation in Mutare diocese may be inculturated in future. In other words, inculturation in Mutare diocese is not yet fully implemented, as implied throughout this study. Thus, our findings are in agreement with our hypothesis. It was suggested that the diocese of Mutare could benefit from lessons from other African countries. The two major areas where this help is needed are inculturation in the use of local staple food and in the invocation of African ancestors during Eucharistic celebration.

It is also important to observe that Catholics in Mutare diocese need on-going catechesis, what I have called in this work an ‘awareness campaign.’ This awareness campaign will help to prepare them well to acknowledge the need for inculturation and its ramifications.
and implications. Such an awareness campaign will enable Catholics in Mutare to see the need to inculturate the Eucharist through the use of local staple food, for example, in their Eucharistic celebration. Christ instituted the Eucharist and celebrated it in the context of the Jewish culture. In the same way, Mutare diocese must continue to improve its attempts to inculturate the Eucharist for the enrichment of its Catholic members and for the growth of the Catholic Church in the country as a whole. It is important to aim at improvements because the progress made so far in incultrating the Eucharist is far from enough. While we commend the effort made so far, it is equally necessary to point out that there is much yet to be done.
CHAPTER 10:
CONCLUSIONS

It is said that experience is always the best teacher in all spheres of human existence. As far as this study is concerned, it is one thing to study any branch of theology or academic discipline from within the four walls of a classroom and under the close watch of a teacher, and completely another thing to put into practice what has been learned independently of the teacher. This saying is also true of any kind of formation, especially with regard to missionary experience.

This study, ‘Inculturating the Eucharist in the Catholic diocese of Mutare,’ was primarily motivated by a pastoral experience the writer had as a newly ordained Catholic priest serving in a mission. It was in an attempt to find ways of correcting some of the early mistakes he made, such as ‘over enthusiasm and cultural negligence,’ that he decided to embark on this research. The hope was that with a proper understanding of inculturation and of the significance of the Eucharist to Catholics, the writer would be able to make a meaningful contribution to the Church in Zimbabwe, especially in its diocese of Mutare.

This final chapter, though related to the whole thesis, differs from the individual conclusions in the foregoing chapters in the following ways:

a) It is broader in perspective in the sense that it correlates the various trends that are reflected throughout the whole thesis.

b) It is interpretative because it includes, directly or indirectly, the findings of the research as a whole.

c) It is cumulative and summative in that it gathers all the highlights of the individual chapters and puts them together.

The thesis is made up of ten chapters. The introductory chapter states the problem that is at stake. It also explains the purpose and importance of the study, its methods and the
procedure to be followed. More emphasis was placed on the method because it is through it that relevant information is obtained and provided. Moreover, since no similar research has been done in Mutare diocese, it becomes necessary to specify reliable instrumentation—questionnaires and interviews—in order to solicit valid information. The chapter is fundamental to the whole research because it gives direction on how the study is to proceed in order to achieve its aim. This direction on how to proceed is what Schreiter (1985:5) calls a new “shift in perspective.”

Chapter two focused on the meaning and relevance of inculturation and its importance to the Church in general and to Mutare diocese in particular. In the conceptual framework of an academic research, it is necessary to explain the meanings of some terms as applied in the text. This is important because things often have different meanings to different people. Thus meaning is dynamic because it varies. Chupungco (1992:76) is right, therefore, when he remarks: “It will be recalled that inculturation is a type of dynamic translation that allows the original message to be conveyed to the people’s cultural pattern.”

In order to discover the meaning of inculturation, terms such as ‘adaptation,’ ‘contextualization,’ ‘indigenization,’ ‘enculturation,’ ‘acculturation’ and ‘incarnation’ were examined, defined and explained. Various definitions of inculturation were also analyzed. The reason for the analysis of the definitions was to situate inculturation in the context of a local Church. In other words, one may ask: “Is inculturation relevant to the Catholic Church in Mutare?” The twenty-first century Catholic Church hopes to be firmly rooted in every part of the globe and inculturation is one of the means of achieving this goal. Consequently, everyone should be involved in the promotion of inculturation, including the Catholics in Mutare diocese. Consequently, inculturation is not only relevant to the Catholic diocese of Mutare but is also a necessity.
Chapter three looked at the challenges facing the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, in general, and in Mutare diocese, in particular, with regard to inculturating the Eucharist. Healey and Sybertz (1996:18) summarize these challenges within the context of the universal Church in these words:

One of the great challenges of inculturation in Christian Churches in Africa today is to make correlation between African oral literature and cultural symbols and Christianity, and to express this in peoples’ pastoral theological reflections that concretely speak to peoples’ everyday life.

The everyday life of Catholics in Mutare diocese manifests itself in diverse ways. The Church in Mutare diocese, like any other Church in Africa, faces enormous challenges ranging from the effects of wars, famine and hunger, to lack of full inculturation of Christianity into the peoples’ way of life. On the other hand, the fate of the African people does not just consist of black spots of adversity. Their life also has its bright spots, like the rich cultural values that must be explored. It becomes necessary for the Church to see how to utilize these rich cultural values as a means to improve not only its Eucharistic celebrations but also to help its members out of the perennial misery facing our people in general. Chapter three, therefore, tried to explore also African cultural values such as the extended family system, African symbols, local staple food and others. It is a fact that inculturation is a gradual process. At the same time, it needs courage to implement some policies that favor it and which, at times, do not comply with the status quo. By highlighting the challenges referred to above, this chapter raised awareness of the need to inculturate the Eucharist in Mutare diocese.

Chapter four focused on culture and its implications for faith. It is not possible to talk about the inculturation of the Eucharist without discussing the culture of the people that practice the Christian faith. Shorter’s (1997:246) analysis of culture has a bearing on this chapter as he emphasizes:

It is clear from all this complexity that the work of inculturation involves a great measure of cultural education and cultural development. People must be helped not only to
preserve their culture, but to adapt it to a changed social situation. They have to be helped to realize their cultural ideals, to learn about their culture and to develop it creatively.

By examining the definitions of culture, emphasizing its symbolism as well as recalling its function as a medium of communication, chapter four highlighted its importance and the role it plays in the understanding of the Christian faith. Just as the culture of a people is transmitted from generation to generation, in the same way the Christian faith must be passed on to people through the medium of culture. For any celebration of the Eucharist to be meaningful and appreciated by Africans, Okoye (2000:236) maintains: “It must include a richer section of texts and some symbols which highlight the values/dimensions of the Eucharist”. Thus, any meaningful inculturation that aims to succeed must take the culture of the people seriously. In the present context, an understanding of Shona culture and its symbolism is the proper vehicle for the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese. This is where the importance of this chapter lies.

In chapter five an effort was made to explain the meaning and significance of the Eucharist in the New Testament and its relationship to inculturation. The aim was to discover whether the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper had some cultural traits that could facilitate Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese. The understanding of the origin of the Eucharist in its cultural background is fundamental to Eucharistic inculturation. This means that the knowledge of the first Eucharistic celebration at the Last Supper in its cultural context inspires all later celebrations, beginning with those of the early Christians. Moloney (1997:7) echoes the same sentiment:

> Many factors have led to the predominant understanding and practice of [the] Eucharist in the various Christian traditions. While some of these factors are inevitably cultural and thus historically conditioned, the story of Jesus’ celebration of the final meal with his disciples has always guided the Eucharistic thought and practice of the Christian Churches.

Just as the celebration of the Eucharist was important to Jesus and his disciples within the Jewish context, as well as to the early Christians in their various cultural traditions, even more so is the celebration of the Eucharist important to us in our Shona cultural setting.
LaVerdière (1996:ix) is clear on this point when he affirms: “There is no separating the Eucharist from the assembly celebrating it. Nor is there separating the assembly from the Church it represents”. The Eucharist as thanksgiving is well expressed in the New Testament. Thanksgiving is also integral to Shona cultural expression of gratitude. It becomes a challenge to the Catholic Church in Mutare to integrate the Eucharistic celebration into this Shona cultural value.

In an attempt to understand the significance of the Eucharist in the lives of Catholics, ‘Eucharistic catechesis’ is very necessary. In the first place, it is not possible for people to inculturate what they do not know. In order to facilitate ‘Eucharistic catechesis’, a critique of current forms of catechetical instruction was made, their limitations highlighted and suggestions proffered for innovative ways of Eucharistic catechesis. The importance of ‘tradition’ in relation to Eucharistic inculturation was discussed. As Jesus incarnated himself into the Jewish culture, it was necessary to consider in this chapter the place of ‘Shona cultural values’ in Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare. Chapter five thus is important because it helped us to understand the cultural set up under which Jesus celebrated the first Eucharist with his disciples. The lesson from this chapter is that for the celebration of the Eucharist to be meaningful in Mutare diocese, it must be deeply rooted in Shona culture through the medium of inculturation.

Since the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life, the Church down the ages has continued to provide her teachings on the Eucharist without relenting. Chapter six tried to examine these teachings on the Eucharist from the ‘Didache’ to the Second Vatican Council. The teachings examined here came from documents, writings of the early Fathers of the Church and from the ecumenical Councils. In an attempt to study these teachings, some of the past documents of the Church, the writings of the Fathers of the Church and reports of ecumenical councils were reviewed. The aim was to find out whether they have any relevance to inculturation.
It must be noted that these early teachings on the Eucharist, teachings that have lasted many centuries, did not have any particular concern about inculturation. The effort in this chapter was to make reasonable interpretations from these teachings so as to deduce their relevance for our present quest for inculturation. It was only during the Second Vatican Council that emphasis on the need to respect peoples’ cultures was made. Even then, the documents of Vatican II never mentioned the word ‘inculturation’ or any other related word. Because of the outstanding recognition given to culture by Vatican II and its encouragement of respect for peoples’ cultures, Vatican II was considered as a ‘vehicle’ for the promotion of inculturation. It would not be right, however, to blame the early Christian writers for their omission of inculturation in their writings because inculturation was not a matter of concern to them as it is for us in the twenty-first century. As these early Christian writers battled with the problems of their times, chapter six encouraged us to find solutions to our present problem of Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese.

Chapter seven examined the various aspects of the Eucharist as understood and used in the Catholic Church. Such aspects as: Eucharist as thanksgiving, Eucharist as sacrifice, Eucharist as memorial, and Eucharist as symbol were examined. The Jewish understanding of sacrifice as thanksgiving was found to be an encouragement to Catholics in Mutare because Shona culture is replete with expressions of gratitude. The Eucharist as thanksgiving is thus an important cultural value for the promotion of Eucharistic inculturation in Mutare diocese because thankfulness or gratitude is well practiced in Shona culture.

Chapter seven also examined the role of the Eucharist as a meal that unites. Pope Benedict XVI (2003:114) has a good analysis of this important role of the Eucharist in these words: “The content of the Eucharist, what happens in it, is the uniting of Christians, by bringing them from their state of separateness into the unity of the one Bread and the one Body”. In other words, this aspect of the Eucharist as a symbol of unity, makes this chapter relevant to the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese, where Shona culture promotes unity and hospitality through the extended family system.
Chapter eight introduced the various occasions and constitutive elements necessary in the inculturation of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese. It is important to note at the onset that there was no intention in this chapter to consider the possible implementation of inculturation in Mutare diocese. It only tried to establish the significance of these elements so as to provide a good background for the full discussion of the real implementation of inculturation in chapter nine. The Chapter began by considering the geographical location of Mutare diocese in Zimbabwe, where the research took place, before dwelling on the real subject of the chapter. It was important to discuss the various constitutive elements of inculturation in chapter eight because:

i) The definitions of inculturation and the Eucharist were discussed in the previous chapters

ii) The chapter was in a better position to examine what happened in the past so as to confirm what is in the present and to be able to project what will happen in future.

iii) The chapter paved the way for chapter nine better to interpret the actual celebrations of the Eucharist in Mutare diocese.

iv) The chapter also played a pivotal role in bringing into focus some solemnities of the Church, some important moments in peoples’ lives and the place of smaller groups in the Church. These activities are celebrated in the context of the Eucharist.

The discussion on Eucharistic inculturation, it would seem, is not fully complete if it is limited only to liturgical activities on Sundays. There is an absolute need to discuss, for example, the inculturation of those joyful moments that confer status on people in the Church who celebrate the Eucharist. That is why I contend that the Eucharist is not celebrated in the air because it is celebrated by people in a given context. In the light of the above explanations, chapter eight argued that the two great solemnities of the Church—Christmas and Easter—the two joyful moments of marriage and ordination, and celebration in smaller groups are occasions for inculturation in Mutare diocese. This is where the importance of chapter eight lies.
Chapter nine is the real hub of the thesis in the sense that it is the actualization of all the theories developed in the previous chapters. In other words, it enabled us to determine how inculturation of the Eucharist is practiced in Mutare diocese. Chapter nine is very important because it dealt directly with the people in Mutare diocese who celebrate the Eucharist. In order to solicit responses from Mutare Catholics, questions were designed for various groups in the congregation and distributed.

In most of the questions for the adults and the priests, the ‘matrix’ method was used. It was explained that matrix questions are used when several questions with the same set of response categories are asked. On the other hand, the children’s questions were formulated with mainly ‘yes’ or ‘no’ options. The opinions of these Catholics, expressed also through interviews, were analyzed, interpreted and discussed under headings such as the word of God, cultural values, celebrations with smaller groups, solemnities and joyful moments. The analysis, the interpretations and the discussions were evaluated under three headings: celebration, participation and application of cultural values. The evaluation in this chapter enabled me to highlight the areas where the inculturation of the Eucharist has progressed in Mutare diocese as well as in those areas where there is little or no inculturation at all.

It was discovered that in those areas where there is no inculturation, the likely reasons for this failure were lack of proper catechesis or lack of awareness campaigns and also the desire to hold onto the status quo. The sooner the people in Mutare diocese are made to understand that what one eats is what one offers to his or her God, for instance, the better for us to patronize the use of local staple food in the celebration of the Eucharist. The consolation came from the fact that inculturation is a gradual process. In order to facilitate this gradual process in our diocese, it was argued, that there is need for external support from other African counties. In this case, borrowing a leaf from the Zairean Mass, among others, would be of great help.
In conclusion, the approach adopted in this study was not only explorative, historical and analytical. It was also interactive in the sense that the message proclaimed is always interacting with the culture of the people and the result of the interaction manifested itself in the ritual celebration. It was also interactive because during the oral interviews, the researcher spent fruitful time with different categories of Catholics in Mutare. All these interactions, it is hoped, will bring about a desired, meaningful and lively Eucharistic celebration. In a nutshell, it is important to have Christianity deeply rooted in Shona culture because the Christ we celebrate in the Eucharist is the same Christ of yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8), who goes to meet his followers in their own land and culture in order to become part of them, even in Mutare diocese.
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