



Eucharistic Revival

Last year, The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops called for a three-year Eucharistic Revival in this nation. We are now over a year and a half into the process and I'm not sure I see any difference in the community that celebrates their Catholic faith on Sundays at the Mission.

I don't mean to sound all doom-and-gloom, but when I hear the word *revival*, I expect to see some joyful emotion in our celebrations!

What has happened to us as a nation . . . as Christians . . . as a Catholic Parish? As we become more and more addicted to our *screen* life, we become more and more detached from our *real* life.

Our Country was founded on the principles of *freedom of religion* – NOT freedom from religion. Secularism has been steadily creeping up on us for decades, so that even though most middle to late aged people tend to affiliate themselves with a faith, more and more of them are no longer participating in that faith community's life on a regular basis. Our children's generation, for the most part, has chosen to remain unaffiliated in their spiritual journey and their political one.

I remember as a child, on those rare occasions when our family went somewhere on a weekend, the first order of business was always to find the Catholic church, in whatever town we found ourselves, and discover what the Mass times were so we wouldn't miss our Sunday Mass. Faith and our participation with it were priorities in our lives. It often seems to me now that some people choose to come to Mass only if they can't figure out anything else to do on Sunday.

As an introvert by nature, I thrive on quiet alone time. I have often thought I'd make a much better Christian if it didn't involve dealing with *other people*. While I may entertain that thought fleetingly, I know in my heart that you can't really be *Christian*, a true follower of Christ, without interacting with the rest of the human race (the Body of Christ). Mass is meant to feed us both intellectually, spiritually and emotionally. We receive Christ in the Eucharist and are nourished in our human form, while Jesus extends grace, comfort, strength and support to us for the upcoming week. I have had people say to me, "I don't go to Mass anymore because I don't get anything out of it." How very sad. Maybe everything isn't about *me*. Maybe going to Mass is about celebrating what God has already done for us, and all that He continues to do for us every second of our lives. Maybe, just maybe, we could offer up that extra hour of sleep, or extra cup of coffee, to do something that exhibits our thanksgiving for our life, our family, our homes, our health, our community.

Every Mass reminds us of Christ's sacrifice of himself for our sins. It is horrific to think that we take that for granted! That the ultimate sacrifice, made on our behalf, has become simply a memory, a symbol, a wallpaper version of our distant past, is the devil's finest achievement.

Christians are, by their very baptism, a people who inherit a vocation of priest, prophet and king. We become members of the Body of Christ, a dwelling-place of the Blessed Trinity, a holy temple.

"If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and will make our abode with him." John 14:23.

That very special relationship needs to be fed and nurtured to remain healthy and to thrive.

Imagine that you lose use of your arm or your leg. Maybe you've broken it and can't use it for a period of time. Very quickly you begin to realize how much you depend on that arm or leg and how you miss using it. When the bone heals, and the cast comes off, your limb may look a little worse from lack of use, but your joy of getting use of it again is genuine and very present. The body rejoices in the return of the limb, back in action and participating with the body.

In 2019, the world was accosted by pandemic. We watched in disbelief as our offices, our restaurants, our schools . . . and unbelievably, our churches shut their doors. We were horrified and scared, but being adaptable, we learned to interact in all these venues online. The problem with that is that we missed the interaction with the rest of the body of Christ, and we were unable to receive Christ in the Eucharist. I thought (and hoped) that everyone would flock back to the churches in droves when the long period of estrangement ended. The end results are very disappointing. Many people got used to sleeping in, watching (or not) Mass on television (or their computer screen) and they have rationalized the absence of the Eucharist from their lives.

How very sad for the Body of Christ. If you left that arm or leg in the cast forever, what would happen? The limb would shrivel up and become useless. For the Body of Christ to thrive, all of its members must be participatory.

Our relationship with our God needs to be our number one priority! To accomplish that, we need to spend quality time with our Triune God, and we need to be active members of the Body of Christ. That means celebrating Mass (at least weekly) and partaking of the Sacrifice of the Mass . . . the Eucharist . . . offered up on our behalf for our eternal life. When we gaze upon the Eucharist (*the very Body of our Lord*) at Mass, we need to see the sacrifice for who it is. We need to realize and deeply internalize the fact that Jesus Christ, the very Son of God, gave his life for us . . . for YOU . . . and for ME. My prayer for this Eucharistic Revival is that each and every one of us will come to the realization that this sacrifice is personal. It is not something in the distant past that's been relegated to the history books. It is a sacrifice that God himself made to save each and every one of his children.

When you realize that Jesus died an agonizing death for our salvation, how can we remain untouched by his sacrifice? How can we *not* hunger and thirst for the Eucharist? The very body and blood of Christ being offered to the Body of Christ on earth. When you watch the consecration, try to internalize the fact that even if you were the only person on earth, Christ still would have paid the price for you to receive the opportunity to have eternal life with our Triune God.

When you get that, *truly get it*, you will be overwhelmed with the love and gratitude of our faith! We are supposed to be the people with the *Good News!* If that is true, how can we help but explode with love for others as we accept the love God gives to us? How can we help but scramble to participate with our faith community in the Sacrament of the Eucharist? Our being together completes the Body, and our love and support for one another is fed most by our time spent together

For those who are battling various health challenges, please stay connected to your parish family. We want to lift you up in prayer daily; please let us know how we can pray for you. If you need help, with rides, with meals, with chores, please reach out and ask. The Body of Christ is here to love, help and support you in your trials. If you want Communion brought to you, let us know.

The Eucharist is **NOT JUST A SYMBOL!** It is the living body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Savior. This belief is what sets us apart as Catholic Christians. Pray that the Lord, himself, will reveal his truth to you and help you to believe. If we know the *Good News*, then let our faces and our actions show it! Let us share that news with a dark world that is in grave need of it. Many U.S. churches are closing due to lack of parishioners; going the route of many European churches. As Catholic Christians, we need to stand up and be counted; we need to actively participate in the future of the Church!

Let us join together, as the Body of Christ, to celebrate the Sacrament of the Eucharist. Let us partake in the sacred mystery through which our faith is fed and deepened. Let us look again at the gift we are offered and allow ourselves to not just participate, but to thoroughly embrace and celebrate, the awesome gift we are being given!

By Joan Steele, Mission Administrator & Parish Catechetical Leader



WHERE DO YOU STAND?

In 2019 a survey of Catholics was conducted asking whether they believed in the Eucharist. Only one-third of the Catholics polled believed that Jesus is really, truly, and substantially present under the appearance of the bread and wine.

What?

My faith has been an up and down journey through my 75 years but I never once lost my belief that during the Consecration – when the bells loudly ring to alert us of just how important, sacred and profound the next action at the altar will be—mere bread and wine is completely transformed, transubstantiated into the living body and blood of Christ.

“...he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me, and I in him. John 6:54-56

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 1324) states that the Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian Life... for in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, **namely Christ Himself**, our Pasch.”

How has this message, belief, spiritual foundation been lost in the hearts of Catholics? Did we stop teaching our young this tenet of our faith? Did we somehow shy away from talking about the blood and body? Were we too ‘politically correct’ in our discussions to speak out loud

and with confidence that it **is** the blood that washes us clean? It **is** the body and blood that we consume into our bodies when we stand or kneel at the altar rail and receive the most precious gift that we could have ever been given.

Christ Himself is present really, truly, and substantially in the Bread and Wine. Why is this belief harder to believe as ‘gospel’ than the rising of our Redeemer? He rose from the dead! We didn’t see it. We weren’t there when it happened. We didn’t get to place our hand inside the nail prints...but we believe. We believe through faith. In faith, we believe in the real presence so as to fully live with Christ in us.

Catholics, the Eucharist **is** what sets us apart from all other Christians. The Eucharist **is** the source and summit.

Georgia, Parishioner

I am the bread of life

He who comes to me shall not hunger

He who believes in me shall not thirst

No one can come to me unless the Father draw him

The bread that I will give

Is my flesh for the life of the world

And he who eats of this bread

He shall live forever

He shall live forever

And I will raise him up

And I will raise him up

And I will raise him up on the last day

Source: [Musixmatch](#)

Songwriters: John Michael Talbot

I Am the Bread of Life lyrics © Universal Music - Brentwood Benson Publ., Birdwing Music

Outreach Ministry

Mission San Antonio de Padua supports several outreach programs. We are looking for someone to help us grow this ministry. It won't take a lot of time; you do not need any training and you will be answering God's call to minister to your brothers and sisters.

Programs:

Communion Service for the Homebound: Please let us know if you need communion brought to you. Receiving the Eucharist is fundamental to our Catholic beliefs.

Prayer Circle: Are you willing to pray for those in need? Do you need special prayer? The prayer circle is a great way to reach out and reach up! You don't need to be able to travel; prayer requests can be shared within the group via the telephone or email. A scheduled prayer time of 8 a.m., 12 noon and 8 p.m. unites those offered prayers. Join in any time or all times to add your united voice of prayer for those in our parish family who are in need.

Meals during a family illness/hospitalization: Would you be able to provide a meal for someone who is in need? Are you in need of some help while you deal with health issues?

Carpooling services for Mass: If you need a ride to Mass or if you can provide a ride, this might be the ministry for you.

Want to help in other ways? We are always looking for volunteers to help in the Padre's Garden, Clean the church or work on our necessary fund raisers. Call the Mission for more ideas.

If you are interested in lending a hand or would like to be remembered in any of these ministries, please contact Joan at the office.

Mission San Antonio

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