



From the Pastor  
14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in  
Ordinary Time - A  
July 9, 2023

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SACRED LITURGY.

Our next reflection on  
Pope Francis' 2022  
Apostolic Letter,  
'*Desiderio Desideravi*,'  
Latin for *Jesus' pre-Last*

*Supper* words: "I have earnestly desired [to eat this  
Passover with you before I suffer.]" [Luke 22:15] considers  
the *Liturgy* as THE place to encounter *Christ*.  
'*Desiderio Desideravi*' [DD] dovetails so perfectly  
with my years-long series on the 2022-2025  
*National Eucharistic Revival*: this is *Part #32* of  
that ongoing reflection on the *Eucharist*.

### THE CHURCH: SACRAMENT OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.

Those who, like me, are 'old' [or  
'seasoned!'] enough to remember the *Baltimore  
Catechism* should recall the answer to question  
#574: "What is a Sacrament?" [Failing to  
remember it could cause your *Confirmation* to be  
revoked!] The answer is: "A Sacrament is an  
outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace."  
As "the image of the invisible God" [Colossians 1:15]  
and God's "Word made Flesh" [Cf. John 1:14], *Jesus  
Christ* is the ultimate 'Sacrament.' To know, hear  
and see *God*, we need only to learn from and  
imitate, listen to and reflect on *Jesus Christ*.

However, as *Saint Paul* was shocked to learn on  
that road to Damascus, the *Church IS* the *Body of  
Christ*. For as the *Lord Jesus* said to him, "Saul,  
Saul, why are you persecuting me?" [Acts 9:4] In  
*Saint Paul's* understanding at the time, he was  
only persecuting the members of this new sect of  
*Judaism* who acknowledged *Jesus* as the long-  
awaited *Messiah* - not the *Christ Himself*. But as  
the *Risen Lord* made perfectly clear: the *Church  
IS* His *Body*, His *Presence* - and whatever is done  
to His *Church* is done to Him!

### THE CHURCH: BRIDE OF THE NEW ADAM.

*Scripture* presents the *Church* as the *Bride of  
Christ*, who, as a loving husband, will always  
defend and protect his bride. Through the ages,  
from early *Church* leaders, the 'Fathers of the  
*Church*,' most of whom were *Bishops*, to the  
most recent *papal documents*, the *Church* has  
consistently taught that she came forth from the  
pierced side of the *Crucified Christ* as He slept in  
death on the *Cross* - a most intriguing imagery.

For after creating and supplying *Adam* with all  
he needed to live in this world, *God* "cast a deep  
sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he  
took out one of his ribs and closed up its place  
with flesh. The LORD God then built the rib that  
he had taken from the man into a woman. When  
he brought her to the man, the man said: "This  
one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my  
flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of  
man this one has been taken." [Genesis 2:21-23]  
*Saint Paul* quotes this segment from *Genesis* in  
his teaching on *Marriage*, adding, "This is a great  
mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the  
church. " [Ephesians 5:32] We MUST grasp this  
marital image to truly understand the *holy Mass*!

As we heard in the *Eastertime* intro to the *Rite of  
Sprinkling*: "... from the pierced side of the  
*Crucified Christ* flowed both blood and water,  
the source of the Church's sacramental life."  
These words refer to how, after breaking the legs  
on the two men executed with *Jesus* - rendering  
them unable to lift themselves up to breathe, so  
they quickly suffocated - a soldier thrust his lance  
into the side of *Jesus* who was already dead. [Cf.  
John 19:31-37] Thereafter, *Jesus* would see *US* as  
*Adam* saw *Eve*: as 'bone of his bone and flesh of  
his flesh!' What an awesome, wonder-filled way  
to see ourselves: as *Christ's Bride*, His beloved,  
His Heart's desire!

This, in turn, raises what we do at *holy Mass* from  
merely 'fulfilling an obligation' or 'rendering  
fitting praise' as some see it, to being participants  
in the *marriage* of *Christ* and His *Church*. At *holy  
Mass*, we are united to *Christ* in a most intimate  
way as we become one with Him in His self-  
sacrifice, offered out of obedience to His *Father's*  
will - and out of love for us. This, in turns, means  
that each one of us cannot 'do our own thing' at  
*holy Mass*; we must be, as was said of the  
*Apostles* and the first *Christians*, of one mind and  
one heart, united in one love and one mission,  
working - not as individuals with personal goals,  
but as a community who share in the breaking of  
bread. [Cf. Acts 1:14; 2:42-46; 4:32-37]

Next week: what *can* - and what *must* - we *ALL*  
do to promote the full, conscious, active, and  
fruitful celebration of the *holy Mass*?

*In His holy Name,*

*Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, KCHS*