



From the Pastor  
15<sup>th</sup> Sunday in  
Ordinary Time - A  
July 16, 2023

### **DO WE PARTICIPATE IN HOLY MASS?**

Reflection #4 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] shows how **God** works through the **Sacred Liturgy**. **'Desiderio Desideravi'** dovetails so perfectly with my years-long series on the **2022-2025 National Eucharistic Revival**, that this is **Part #33** of my reflections on the **Eucharist**.

### **THE THEOLOGICAL SENSE OF THE LITURGY.**

Those who do not come to **holy Mass** each week cheat themselves of this primary source of countless spiritual graces; but it is not enough to simply 'show up' either! The liturgical reforms of the **Second Vatican Council** strove to help us enjoy God's blessings by promoting the **"full, conscious, active, and fruitful participation"** [cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* #11] of all who come to **holy Mass** and other rites. This not only demands that we strive to understand the meaning of the **Scriptures**, actions, symbols and signs of our rites and rituals; we must also have the proper mindset and disposition to benefit from them.

**'Desiderio Desideravi'** highlights two heresies that have long plagued the **Church**: **Gnosticism** and **Pelagianism**. **Gnosticism** rears its ugly head in those who have an **"I know better,"** or **"This is the ONLY way,"** or **"If you knew what I knew"** attitude. They dismiss or even disparage official rubrics, norms or options like receiving **Holy Communion** in the hand- or standing to do so as mandated by the **USA's Bishops**. They twist or ignore rubrics and impose their own innovations. Such abuses corrupt the **Church's** unity and violate **Christ's Last Supper** request that **"all may be one."** [John 17:21] Some guidelines that govern our **Rites** permit personal preferences, but the essentials are non-negotiable; we are obligated to know the difference! Don't be a **Gnostic**!

**Pelagius**, an un-ordained, lay **Monk** who lived from the 350's to 410's; was a highly educated theologian. His teachings were quite orthodox, but he 'crossed the line' by implying that our fallen human nature was not so bad and that we could 'redeem' ourselves - which means we had

no need for a **Redeemer**! This, in turn, reduced **Jesus** to a good role model or teacher, and the **Sacraments** to unnecessary rites devoid of any power to save us. The **Church** also condemned the other extreme that sees us as totally corrupt and unredeemable; that heresy is known as **Jansenism**, named after the French **Bishop Jansen** [1585-1638], who believed that our free will was so obliterated by **Original Sin** that we play **NO** role in our salvation. A similar heresy is in **Calvinism**, named for **John Calvin**, [1509-1564] who went even further than **Martin Luther** [1483-1546] by professing that **God** pre-determines who is saved and who is not - rendering spiritual works, like celebrating **Sacraments**, useless.

### **SACRED LITURGY: A REMEDY FOR HERESIES.**

The rubrics for the **holy Mass** and other **Rites** help keep us from becoming subjective - that is, if we properly, though not slavishly, follow them. For the rubrics remind us that it is a communal celebration, belonging to no one in particular, even a **Pope**! We 'subject' ourselves to it; we do not create or determine it. And it is properly balanced to keep us from slipping into heresy. How so?

Although we are unworthy, **God** still invites us. So, we usually begin with a **Penitential Act** that seeks forgiveness and mercy; if need be, we go to **Confession** first. Most **Mass** orations are in the plural since we come together, not as individuals, but as a community of unworthy yet redeemed sinners. We need not grasp in the dark alone, by ourselves, as we seek to get through life and into heaven! We have each other, the **Church** and her **Sacraments**, and a weekly gathering to guide and direct, console and nourish us!

**"... SAY THE WORD AND MY SOUL SHALL BE HEALED."** Before receiving **Holy Communion**, we communally admit, **"We need help!"** for the **Church** puts the words of a **Roman Centurion** on our lips: **"Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word ..."** [Matthew 8:8] And **Jesus** does say, **"Come,"** don your wedding gown [get baptized, that is]; **"Repent,"** [go to **Confession** if necessary] and remember: **"I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."** [Luke 22:15]

**In His holy Name,**

**Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, KCHS**