



From the Pastor
23rd Sunday in
Ordinary Time - A
September 10, 2023

AT TABLE WITH OUR MOTHER.

Reflection
#12 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] focuses on our *Blessed Mother* who joins us in our weekly gatherings. For past articles in this series on the three-year *National Eucharistic Revival* [this is article #41!] and the *Holy Father's Letter*, visit our *Parish* website.

BEHOLD, YOUR MOTHER. By entrusting His *Mother* to the *Beloved Disciple* [John 19:25-27] *Jesus* gave His *Mother* to *every* disciple. Some speculate that at least two women attended the *Last Supper* with the *Twelve Apostles*, but *Luke 22:8* specifies that two disciples *Jesus* sent to make the preparations were *Peter* and *John*. Although our *Blessed Mother* was often with her *Son*, and courageously stood at the foot of His *Cross*, she was probably not at the *Last Supper*.

However, like all mothers who rejoice to hear their babies say their first words and see them take their first steps, the *Bible* assures us that our *Blessed Mother* enjoyed both these - first, after her *Son* was born in the flesh, and again, after His new *Body*, the *Church*, was born. As recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, she was present in the *Upper Room* where the *Apostles*, the first *Priests*, echoed her *Son's* words over bread and wine. How proud and thrilled she must have been to see them emulate the actions *Jesus* did at the first *Consecration*. We can only imagine how awesome it must have been for her to receive Him back into her body, where He had lived for nine months in her womb!

And since no loving mother ever abandons her children or stops caring for them, we can be assured of our *Blessed Mother's* concern for us! As the *Preface* for the *BVM, Image and Mother of the Church* - reminds us: "Raised to the glory of heaven, she accompanies your pilgrim Church with a mother's love and watches in kindness over the Church's homeward steps." No wonder every *Catholic Church* that I know of has at least one icon or image, portrait or picture, statue or shrine honoring our *Blessed Mother*.

MAKE OUR MOTHER PROUD AND HAPPY.

Please bear with me as I carry this imagery [which is truly a reality!] to the next level. One of my mother's greatest wishes and joys was to have all five of her children gathered at the same table for a meal. Not just on special occasions, but each week for the *Sunday* family dinner - which was once obligatory, as was *holy Mass*! And it was an added blessing to her if we got through that meal without any arguments, divisive issues or tensions. Would not our *Blessed Mother* want these same things from those who claim to be children of our *Heavenly Father*, brothers and sisters in and of her *Son Jesus*, and *Temples* of the *Holy Spirit*?

What sadness it must cause our *Blessed Mother* when so many excuse themselves for any reason, or do not even plan to join with the rest of the family! How often we sadly say of our *Church Family* what we say of our personal family: that we only get together for weddings and funerals - and so many are getting married 'outside the Church' and not having a *Funeral Mass* or any religious rites at the time of death! [A word to the wise: it is not unusual for *weekly* or even *daily Mass-goers* to have *NO Funeral Mass* or any religious rites because their non-churched next-of-kin do not want it! You can easily preplan and prepay your *Funeral Mass* and other *Rites* through the *Parish Office* so that your *Parish Family* can bid you farewell and join in offering the *holy Mass* for the salvation of your soul!]

From the moment of His conception, *Jesus* was safe in His *Mother's womb*; from the moment of her inception, the *Church* has been safe within her heart. As she helped *Jesus* speak His first words and take His first steps, she helped the *Church* speak our first words and take our first steps. Her attentive acceptance of the *Archangel Gabriel's* message, which was *God's Word*, teaches us to listen for and heed *God's word* which comes to us through *Sacred Scripture*, especially when it is proclaimed at *holy Mass*. As her faith enabled *God's Word* to become *Flesh*, we enable *God's word* to come alive by following her example. These analogies can go on and on, but by now, I hope you get the point! *Holy Mary, Mother of God* and our *Mother* ... *pray for us!*

In His holy Name,

Very Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, VF, KCHS