



*From the Pastor*  
**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday in**  
**Ordinary Time - A**  
**September 17, 2023**

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE** **OF THE EIGHTH DAY.**

The 13<sup>th</sup> and final 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] focuses on the significance of our weekly Sunday celebration. For past articles in this series on the three-year **National Eucharistic Revival** [this is article #42!] and the **Holy Father's Letter**, visit our **Parish** website.

**WHAT IS THE 'EIGHTH DAY'?** Some ask why the **Church** changed the **Sabbath Day** to **Sunday**, and where did she get the authority to alter **God's Commandment**. The simple answer is **we** did not change the **Sabbath Day** to **Sunday**; the **Risen Lord**, whom **Saint Thomas** called *"My Lord and my God,"* did! Since **Apostolic** times, the **Church** has continued to gather each week on **Sunday**: the day the **Risen Lord** first appeared to the **Apostles**; the day He **Broke Bread** with those two disciples on the **Road to Emmaus**; the day the **Holy Spirit** descended upon the **Infant Church**. With the old creation's sin and death finally conquered and vanquished by **Christ**, the **first** day of the week became **'the Eighth Day'** or the first day of the new creation ushered in by the **Risen Lord!**

Thus, the pattern for us to follow was set! We start each week by gathering as **One Body**: the **Church**, so we can listen to **One Message: God's Word**, and partake of **One Meal**: the **Body** and **Blood** of **Christ**, so that we can be sent forth as **One Body**. Then, having depleted the graces and strength we receive from **Word** and **Sacrament**, we return to be reinforced with another dose of **heavenly grace** as we continue on our **earthly journey**. And some people think they are just *'fulfilling the obligation'* by *'going to Mass'* and *'receiving Holy Communion!'* The reality is: we are building **God's Kingdom on Earth** ... by sharing in the **Bread of Angels**, who came down from heaven to save us: the **Bread of Life!**

The **Holy Father** concludes his **Letter** by calling all **Ordained Priests**, who accept the great privilege

and awesome responsibility to lead the **Sacred Mysteries**, to faithfully fulfill their duties. He reminds my priestly brothers and me to never stop learning why we do what we do, and to internalize and strive to fully imitate the **Sacred Mysteries** we conduct day after day. And he implores the people whom we serve to pray for and support their 'spiritual fathers' by also coming to a deeper knowledge of - and greater appreciation for - the **Sacred Rites** of our **Faith**.

**Pope Francis** then cites the primary place where all this truly comes alive: in the **Eucharistic Prayer** during which the **Consecration** takes place. He notes that, while most the **Assembly** takes part in the **Eucharistic Prayer** by their reverent silence and an occasional acclamation, the **Priest** who presides **NEEDS** their intercession so that he may fulfill his part. And he [and his brother **Priests** who concelebrate with him] must truly become what he renders by the gift of **Ordination**: he, too, must become the **'Body broken'** and **'Blood outpoured'** for the salvation of the world - which he cannot do without your help! So, as you rely on me and my brother **Priests** in our ministry, we rely on you and your prayers for us!

It was, and is, the hope of **His Holiness** - and mine - that his **Letter**, my reflections, and above all, this three-year **National Eucharistic Revival**, will help us all better know and live by the great gift of **Eucharist**, so readily available to us, week after week, even day after day, at **holy Mass**. Each one of us must ask ourselves: what will I do to better understand, participate in, and benefit from, the **Sacred Mysteries** of our **Faith**? How can I become a more attentive, more active, more appreciative member of **Christ's Body**, His **Church**? What will I do to invite into - or welcome back - those who do not worship **Sunday** after **Sunday**?

One final plea: pray for more local **Vocations** to the **Priesthood**, especially from our own **Parish** and **Diocese**, so that the **holy Mass** can be offered in ways that we can more easily join in and understand. Pray for the health and stamina of the men who serve us now. And ask the **Master of the Harvest** to bring to eternal rest those who, while they lived on earth, fed us with food from heaven during their **Priestly Ministry!**

***In His holy Name,***

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