



From the Pastor
June 26, 2022
The 13th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - C

***THE MYSTERY OF THE
EUCHARIST IN THE LIFE
OF THE CHURCH***

WE NEED TO MEET.

We all missed out on so many gatherings during the worst days of the pandemic: weddings and funerals; anniversary, birthday, graduation and retirement parties; simple BBQs, and Sunday afternoon dinners, which I hope still exist! Other communal events, like the theater and sports, also fell by the wayside. All this exacted a *heavy toll* on us, for by nature and divine intention, God made us *SOCIAL* creatures who need to be with, support, and celebrate with each other.

Furthermore, science shows that, babies born of drug addicted mothers do not cry when they are hungry; their natural, innate systems are so damaged while in their mother's tainted wombs, they fade into themselves and often die. And as statistics now show, many *Catholics'* supernatural, divinely inspired 'spiritual senses' were dulled or even destroyed by the pandemic, scandals and worldly distractions. Easily tuning into 'virtual' rites and the *temporary* dispensation from the obligation to participate in *holy Mass* became bad habits some have yet to break. I hope that, with our *Bishops'* suggestions and guidance, reflections and encouragement, we will all better appreciate - and take a more active part in - our weekly *Eucharistic* worship.

As I wrote in last week's article, the *US Catholic Bishops* initiated a three-year *National Eucharistic Revival* which aims to renew devotion and belief in the *Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist*; it culminates with a *National Eucharistic Congress, July 17-21, 2024*. Reading the USCCB's article is ideal [<https://eucharisticrevival.org>] as is taking part in the free study guide available at [<https://reviveparishes.com/eucharist>]. I will be offering, however, 'snippets' of the document, *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church*, and a synopsis of each section, in the months [perhaps years!] to come.

The boxed area that follows is one such abbreviated segment from the Preface of the document. It lays the foundation for what our *Holy Mother Church* wisely, lovingly, and caringly

'obligates' her children to do: gather each *Sunday* and on other special days for *holy Mass* and receive *Holy Communion*. For as our *Bishops* remind us: we are a family - and the *Eucharist* is our *Family Meal* - and no family is complete if anyone is missing from the family table! Here's how they said it:

[As] Pope Saint John Paul II reminded us: "[The] promise of Christ [*"I am with you always, to the end of the age"*] [Matthew 28:20]] never ceases to resound in the Church as the fertile secret of her life and the wellspring of her hope. As the day of Resurrection, Sunday is not only the remembrance of a past event: it is a celebration of the living presence of the Risen Lord in the midst of his own people." ... [But] the pandemic has forced us to stay physically distant from one another and, for a time, to view the celebration of the Mass on a television or computer screen. Many of the faithful appear to have had their faith and their desire for the Eucharist strengthened by such a long separation. [We also] sense that others, having lived without Mass for so long, may have become discouraged or accustomed to life without the Eucharist ... We know that we need Christ to be present in our lives ... [who told us] "*Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you.*" [John 6:53] The Lord accompanies us in many ways, but none as profound as when we encounter him in the Eucharist. [As the Servant of God Dorothy Day said: "... We are nourished by [Christ's] flesh that we may grow to be other Christs ... I believe this literally, just as I believe the child is nourished by the milk from his mother's breast." ... [However, as Pope Saint John Paul II stated:] "Those who have received the grace of baptism are not saved as individuals alone, but as members of the Mystical Body, having become part of the People of God."

As we take a *fresh* look - or, perhaps, look for the *first* time as *adults* [since many *Catholics* sadly stop learning about our *Faith* at their *Confirmation!*] - may we gain new insights, new appreciation, and a new desire to worthily receive the *Lord Jesus* in *Holy Communion*. And may we better become what, or rather, *Who*, we receive.

In His holy Name,

Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, KCHS