



*From the Pastor*  
**December 11, 2022**  
*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of*  
*Advent - A*  
*Gaudete [Rejoice]*  
*Sunday*

### **OUR RESPONSE TO THE GREAT GIFT OF EUCHARIST.**

On this *Gaudete* or *Rejoicing* Sunday, I offer part 18 of my series on the USA Bishops' *National Eucharistic Revival* document *The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church*. In this article I will reflect on how we can best **RESPOND** to *God's Great Gift of Eucharist*. For past articles on this *Revival*, the whole document, and a free study guide, go to our parish website - [easeton.net](http://easeton.net) - and click on *National Eucharistic Revival Bulletin Articles*.

*A Quote from Saint [Mother] Teresa of Calcutta*

*"When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then. When you look at the Sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now."*

**RESPONDING TO GOD'S GIFTS.** We all know, from an early age, what I will call a *Gift-Receiver's Routine*. After we express our thanks for the gift, we unwrap, open or set it up; then we read the manual or instructions, insert the batteries and charge it up; then we use it and enjoy it. [And it never hurts to say 'thank you' again and again to the gift giver.] What we do - or should do - after receiving a *Christmas* or birthday, anniversary or graduation gift - or any gift - we must also do with the gifts given to us from *God*, especially the *Great Gift* of the *Most Holy Eucharist*.

Our Church's three-year *National Eucharistic Revival* intends to do all this and more - for those who actively take part in it. As I have mentioned in previous articles, it begins with coming to a deeper realization of *Our Lord's True Presence* in the *Eucharist*. As the quote above from *Saint Mother Teresa* reminds us: what *Jesus* once did on the *Cross* for us is truly made present again and again in the *Sacred Host* we adore and receive. That *Jesus* is willing to come to us and enter into us, with all the graces or gifts He won for us by His *Passion, Death* and *Resurrection*, is truly mind-boggling and amazing!

Going back to my initial analogy about gifts, we must ask ourselves: How often do I thank *Jesus* for the *Great Gift of Eucharist*? How often do I avail myself to receive this *Great Gift*? How well do I properly prepare myself to welcome *Jesus* as a *Guest* within me? Do I ready myself to receive Him by confessing my sins, doing penance, and performing acts of mercy or charity? Do I fast on special days of fasting and for one hour [medicine and water are always permitted!] before coming to receive *Holy Communion*?

Catholicism celebrates our unseen, invisible *God* and His graces with seen or visible signs and symbols. What does my outward appearance: my dress, my punctuality, and my active participation say about how important and central coming to receive *Jesus* is to me? Do I *make* time for *holy Mass* when I am away on vacation or for business, when I schedule sporting, hobby, workout, and other events?

Technically, the adage, "*Grace builds on nature.*" is incorrect; for *God* acts first, gifting us with so many 'graces' before we do anything! However, we must *cooperate* with *God's* gifts of grace if we hope to benefit from them; *God* forces nothing on us. We must be continuously open to learning more about, experiencing, and sharing *God's* gifts of grace with others. Do I avail myself to all that the *Church* offers, through her parishes or dioceses, publications or books, for ongoing faith formation? Do I subscribe to any *Catholic* periodicals, newspapers, websites, cable or radio stations? Do I even take advantage of what our Parish PAYS FOR through FORMED: the online *Catholic* website that offers videos, talks and other resources - for which all you must do is register and enjoy? [It is our gift to ourselves!]

**FULL, ACTIVE, CONSCIOUS PARTICIPATION.** As our Bishops remind us, "*The Second Vatican Council taught that, in order to give thanks properly in the celebration of the Mass, we should 'take a full, conscious, and active part in the liturgical celebration.'*" How can you get more involved in the sacred liturgy? What will you do to better understand and celebrate these most sacred rites?

*In His holy Name,*

*Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, KCHS*