



From the Pastor
7th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - A
February 19, 2023
Last Sunday before Lent

EUCCHARISTIC CALL **TO CONVERSION.**

This is part 24 of my series on the USA Bishops' **National Eucharistic Revival**

document: **The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church**. With **Lent** starting this **Ash Wednesday**, it is the perfect time to conclude the document's section on '**Conversion**.' This 3-year revival's goal is to enable us to better understand and celebrate our **Lord's Real Presence** in the **Eucharist**. For past articles on this **Revival**, the whole document, and a free study guide, go to our parish website - **easeton.net**.

SOMETIMES WE MUST START ANEW. We all know what it is like to have a friendship or relationship die. Sometimes it is caused by moving or being transferred from one address, workplace, or school to another - or simply from the transient nature of earthly life. But when it is caused by sin: a breach of confidentiality; a violation of trust; intentional psychological, emotional, or physical harm done to another, etc., it is truly painful. When this occurs between two people, it is most difficult to repair - if not fatal. But not with our relationship with **God**, who always welcomes us back and has given us the process by which we can easily do so: the **Sacrament of Penance** or **Confession**. [More on this **Sacrament** in the weeks to come as we reflect on the revised English translation of the **Order of Penance**, which we only recently received.]

MORTAL SIN. When we freely, knowingly, and willingly choose to do something that involves a grave matter, something opposed to the love of **God** or neighbor, we commit **mortal sin**. And while **Holy Communion** **solidifies** our union with **God** and the **Church**, it **presupposes** that union already exists and is, for the most part, healthy and functional. That is why those conscious of committing serious, grave or mortal sin [unless they make a perfect **Act of Contrition** and do all they can to get to **Confession** ASAP] are **not** to celebrate **holy Mass** or receive **Holy Communion**. This 'rule' is not something a **Priest**, **Bishop** or **Pope** - an **Ecumenical Council** or **Synod of Bishops** - declared: it is in the **Bible**!

"AS THE CHURCH HAS ALWAYS TAUGHT."

From the start, the **Church** has regulated who may - or may not - receive **Holy Communion**. Besides being **Baptized** and accepting our **Lord's Real Presence** in the **Eucharist**, our lives must also be in keeping with **Church teaching**. For as **Saint Paul** wrote: **"... whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord. A person should examine himself, and so eat the bread and drink the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself."** [1 Corinthians 11:27-29] That's why the **Church** insists that we **examine our conscience** **before** entering into **Holy Communion** and that we refrain from partaking in the **Eucharist** if any major part of our life is **not** in line with **God's revealed Truths**.

We cannot **claim** to be a part of **Christ's Body**, His **Church** if we are **not living** as a part of **Christ's Body**, His **Church**. One of the many heresies that rocked our **Church** is **Pelagianism**. It is named for a monk, **Pelagian**, who believed that we do not inherit a fallen state from **Original Sin** and can basically save ourselves without help from **God**, the **Church** or others. **Saint Augustine**, his main critic, agreed with his belief in our basic goodness; a later heresy, **Jansenism**, went to the other extreme and considered us so corrupt that we are incapable of any goodness! However, **Augustine** rightly taught - based on numerous scriptural references - that we cannot do it alone and need all the help **God** offers us.

Among the many 'helps' **God** provides are: the **Church** and the **sacred Scriptures**, which the **Church** properly interprets; the **Sacraments**; the threefold hierarchal ministry of **Deacon**, **Priest** and **Bishop**; and sacred **Liturgy**. We also have each other, for we are called as a **Community of Faith** to walk with and assist each other along the way. And so that no one leads anyone else astray, **Holy Mother Church**, in her concern for the welfare of **ALL** her children, admonishes those **NOT** living in accord with her teachings to refrain from receiving **Holy Communion**. May our understanding and acceptance of these teachings enable all of us to deepen our **Faith**.

In His holy Name,

Rev. Thomas J. Serafin, KCHS