



From the Pastor June 19,
2022 The Most Holy
Body and Blood of Christ - C
Father's Day

THE MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

On this **Father's Day**, we remember all fathers, grandfathers, godfathers, stepfathers, Priest-Fathers, all who have a paternal role - and **God the Father**, who sent His **Son** to save us.

Although His bodily, earthly life ended 2,000 years ago, **Jesus** remains with us in every way He promised: in the least of **His brothers and sisters**; in the **sacred Scriptures**; in those **Ordained** to lead and feed His **Church**; and in the **Sacraments** - above all, in the **Most Blessed Sacrament of His Most Holy Body and Blood**: His presence **'par excellence!'**

Today also begins the **US Catholic Bishops'** three-year **National Eucharistic Revival**, which aims to renew devotion and belief in the **Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist**, culminates with a **National Eucharistic Congress, July 17-21, 2024**, and ends on Pentecost 2025. For more info, visit <https://eucharisticrevival.org>. Go to <https://reviveparishes.com/eucharist> to watch a free two-hour online course, presented by **Bishop Andrew Cozzens**, on the Bishops' document on the Eucharist. Below is its opening paragraph, which recalls that dark, dismal day in Rome when our **Holy Father** imparted a **Eucharistic Blessing** on the whole world; I remember kneeling on my sitting room floor to accept this **Blessing**.

On March 27, 2020, at an early point in the global pandemic, Pope Francis walked alone in the rain across an empty St. Peter's Square to offer prayer for the world in a time of crisis. "Faith," he said, "begins when we realize we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we flounder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars." Recalling when Jesus was asleep in the boat as a tempest was raging (Mark 4:35-41), the Holy Father said, "The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith." On that day, Pope Francis presided over the rite of Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction in order to focus our attention on the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. The Pope was reminding us that even in a time of turbulence and crisis, Jesus is present among us, as present as he was long ago in the boat on the Sea of Galilee.

ALWAYS PRESENT TO US. When I was a child, it was customary to 'bless yourself' by making the **Sign of the Cross** as we passed a **Catholic Church** as a sign of respect for the **Eucharistic Presence** of **Jesus** housed in that church's **Tabernacle**. I was sure the **Sisters** peered out their windows to see if we did so as we ran past the Convent Chapel! [We did the same whenever we saw an ambulance with flashing lights as a prayer for the sick person inside.] Why this **Catholic custom** fell out of practice I do not know; perhaps it faded away as more **Catholics** adopted the **Protestant** notion of the **Eucharist** as merely a **symbol**, not the **Real Presence of Jesus** and as our reliance on **God** through prayer also sadly abated.

While the **Apostles** were upset that **Jesus** seemed to be 'sleeping on the job' in the **Gospel** referenced by **Pope Francis** when he imparted the **Eucharistic Blessing** on the world, are we the ones who have now fallen asleep, oblivious to **Christ's Real Presence** among us - as close as the nearest **Tabernacle**? While the **Sanctuary Lamps** that are required nearby **Tabernacles** to alert us to **Christ's Real Presence** are lit, many choose to live in the dark by failing to present themselves before the **Lord's Real Presence**! Our **Bishops** hope to help us reaffirm our faith in **Christ's Real Presence** and encourage us to claim the graces awaiting those who worthily receive the **Eucharist** at **holy Mass**, bask in His **Real Presence** in **Eucharistic Adoration**, or simply make 'a Visit' to a church.

During the most dreadful days of the pandemic, when receiving **Holy Communion** was not permitted, many churches were locked up to lessen social interaction, and many experienced a real 'absence' of **Jesus' Eucharistic Presence**. May we never have to endure such a dilemma again! We must also pray for **Vocations** to the **Priesthood** so that, as is sadly now the case in some parts of the world, people will have to go for weeks or months without receiving **Holy Communion**. Do we take for granted the great Gift of receiving the **Lord Jesus**, who is so readily available to us, each and every day of the week? May this three-year **National Eucharistic Revival** reawaken in us to what, or rather, **Who** is so near to us: **Jesus Christ**, present in **His Most Sacred Body** and **Precious Blood** in the **Eucharist**. And **Happy Father's Day!**

In Christ,

Father Mark