



From the Pastor
19th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - B
August 11, 2024

**THE BREAD OF LIFE
DISCOURSE.**

For the next 2 weeks, our **Responsorial Psalm** will come from **Psalm 34** with the same refrain sung each week: **"Taste and see the goodness of the Lord."** We will

also hear the **Leader of Song** or **Cantor** sing most of its **23** verses. In the **Revised New American Bible**, it has the heading, "[a Psalm of **Thanksgiving to God Who Delivers the Just.**" In its **original** language, it is an **acrostic** hymn, which means each verse begins with the next progressive letter of the alphabet, to suggest precision, perfection and complete totality.

Its refrain, **"Taste and see,"** reminds us of **God's** willingness to condescend to our lowly level. For we, who can only 'know' something through our senses: our eyes and ears, nose, hands and mouth, would not 'know' **God** or His grace had He not 'stooped' to our level so we can **taste** and **see, hear** and **touch** - even **smell** - His presence. **God** humbles Himself so that through **tangible, ordinary** signs we can experience the **intangible** and **extraordinary** reality of His presence!

Some jokingly, and some derogatorily, refer to **Catholic** and other '**high Church**' **Rites** with rhythmic words that claim these **Rites** make us **"the Church of yells, bells and smells."** On this 3rd of a 5-week consecutive proclamation of the **6th Chapter** of **John's Gospel**: the **Bread of Life Discourse**, during the 3-year **National Eucharistic Revival**, our **August** bulletin articles have **Eucharistic** themes. Today it's the **outward** signs used in **Sacred Liturgy** to better comprehend and 'hand on' and proclaim the **God** we **cannot** see with the things we **can sense** or **experience**.

YELLS. On very rare occasions [in my experience] a **Music Minister** has provided ample **penance** for every sin I've committed - or even considered committing, and there can be some horrendous 'hooting and hollering' at **Revival-type Services**. But we usually **"Shout joyfully to the LORD"** [Psalm 100:1] when we raise our voices in song. And contrary to what some sourpusses say, **"Music adds so much to the holy Mass** ... about 15 minutes" ... we do a good job fulfilling **Saint**

Paul's biblical mandate to sing to the **Lord** in **"psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."** [Ephesians 5:19]

BELLS. The **Roman Missal** states: **"A little before the Consecration, if appropriate, a minister rings a small bell as a signal to the faithful. The minister also rings the small bell at each elevation by the Priest, according to local custom."** [GIRM #150] These '**bells**' alert people to look to the **Altar**, where **Christ** is about to become **truly present**. This was essential when **Priests** had their backs to the people, who prayed the **Rosary** or other devotions as they 'privately' prayed the **Eucharistic Prayer**. Hopefully, everyone now **actively participates** by paying attention and by singing the three **Acclamations**: the **Sanctus, Mystery of Faith** and **Amen**. There is something to be said about sacred silence.

SMELLS. Some love the smell of sacred chrism. [**Bishops** add a **balsam** perfume to the **oil** before consecrating **Sacred Chrism**.] The aroma of **Chrism** wafts throughout the church as **Confirmation** is conferred. I was unprepared when people grabbed and kissed my newly **anointed** hands after my **Priesthood Ordination**.

The smell some love, and some hate, is **incense**, which is even used in **non-Christian Rites**; many religions use **incense** and other **scents** in worship. In biblical images of heaven, **God's** throne is engulfed in clouds of it: **"Each of the [24] elders [around the throne] held a harp and gold bowls filled with incense, which are the prayers of the holy ones.** [Revelation 5:8] An **Angel** uses it to present our intentions to the **Lord**: **"The smoke of the incense along with the prayers of the holy ones went up before God from the hand of the angel."** [8:4] We use it to reverence **Christ's Real Presence** in the **Eucharist**, at the **Altar**, in the **Ordained** and then in all the **Baptized**, in **icons, statues** and other **sacred symbols**, and even our body or cremains at our **funeral**.

Not to sound 'hokey-pokey,' but we are expected to throw our whole selves in when we worship: **mind** and **heart** and **soul** - as well as our senses: **sight** and **sound, smell** and **touch**, and above all, **taste**. For by **taste**, our **Eucharistic Lord** literally enters into us as our '**Food for the Journey!**'

In Christ,

Father Mark

Rev. Mark A. Kreder, Pastor