



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 our 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 and our Bishop's catechesis on this **Revival**, go to our parish website - stjustin.org.

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.** Next week and for the weeks leading up to our Lenten Confessions on March 31, we will publish an examination of conscience to help before coming for Confession.

In Christ,

Father Mark