



From the Pastor
14th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - A
July 9, 2023

**THE IMPORTANCE OF
SACRED LITURGY.**

Our next reflection on Pope Francis' 2022 Apostolic Letter, 'Desiderio Desideravi,' Latin for Jesus' pre-Last Supper words: "I have earnestly

desired [to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.]" [Luke 22:15] considers the Liturgy as **THE** place to encounter Christ. 'Desiderio Desideravi' [DD] dovetails so perfectly with our years-long series on the **2022-2025 National Eucharistic Revival**: this is **Part #32** of that ongoing reflection on the Eucharist.

THE CHURCH: SACRAMENT OF THE BODY OF CHRIST.

Those who, like me, are 'old' [or 'seasoned!'] enough to remember the **Baltimore Catechism** should recall the answer to question #574: "What is a Sacrament?" [Failing to remember it could cause your **Confirmation** to be revoked!] The answer is: "A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace." As "the image of the invisible God" [Colossians 1:15] and God's "Word made Flesh" [Cf. John 1:14], Jesus Christ is the ultimate 'Sacrament.' To know, hear and see God, we need only to learn from and imitate, listen to and reflect on Jesus Christ.

However, as **Saint Paul** was shocked to learn on that road to Damascus, the Church IS the Body of Christ. For as the Lord Jesus said to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" [Acts 9:4] In **Saint Paul's** understanding at the time, he was only persecuting the members of this new sect of **Judaism** who acknowledged Jesus as the long-awaited **Messiah** - not the Christ Himself. But as the **Risen Lord** made perfectly clear: the Church IS His Body, His Presence - and whatever is done to His Church is done to Him!

THE CHURCH: BRIDE OF THE NEW ADAM. Scripture presents the Church as the **Bride of Christ**, who, as a loving husband, will always defend and protect his bride. Through the ages, from early Church leaders, the '**Fathers of the Church**,' most of whom were **Bishops**, to the most recent **papal documents**, the Church has consistently taught that she came forth from the pierced side of the **Crucified Christ** as He slept in death on the **Cross** - a most intriguing imagery.

For after creating and supplying **Adam** with all he needed to live in this world, God "cast a deep sleep on the man, and while he was asleep, he took out one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. The LORD God then built the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman. When he brought her to the man, the man said: "This one, at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; This one shall be called 'woman,' for out of man this one has been taken." [Genesis 2:21-23] **Saint Paul** quotes this segment from Genesis in his teaching on **Marriage**, adding, "This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the church." [Ephesians 5:32] We **MUST** grasp this marital image to truly understand the **holy Mass!**

As we heard in the **Eastertime** intro to the **Rite of Sprinkling**: "... from the pierced side of the Crucified Christ flowed both blood and water, the source of the Church's sacramental life." These words refer to how, after breaking the legs on the two men executed with Jesus - rendering them unable to lift themselves up to breathe, so they quickly suffocated - a soldier thrust his lance into the side of Jesus who was already dead. [Cf. John 19:31-37] Thereafter, Jesus would see **US** as **Adam** saw **Eve**: as 'bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh!' What an awesome, wonder-filled way to see ourselves: as **Christ's Bride**, His beloved, His Heart's desire!

This, in turn, raises what we do at **holy Mass** from merely '**fulfilling an obligation**' or '**rendering fitting praise**' as some see it, to being participants in the **marriage** of **Christ** and His **Church**. At **holy Mass**, we are united to **Christ** in a most intimate way as we become one with Him in His self-sacrifice, offered out of obedience to His **Father's** will - and out of love for us. This, in turns, means that each one of us cannot 'do our own thing' at **holy Mass**; we must be, as was said of the **Apostles** and the first **Christians**, of one mind and one heart, united in one love and one mission, working - not as individuals with personal goals, but as a community who share in the breaking of bread. [Cf. Acts 1:14; 2:42-46; 4:32-37]

Next week: what can - and what must - we **ALL** do to promote the full, conscious, active, and fruitful celebration of the **holy Mass**?



In Christ,

Father Mark

Rev. Mark A. Kreder, Pastor