



From the Pastor
15th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - A
July 16, 2023

**DO WE PARTICIPATE IN
HOLY MASS?** Reflection #4
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]
shows how **God** works through the **Sacred
Liturgy**. '**Desiderio Desideravi**' dovetails so
perfectly with our years-long series on the **2022-
2025 National Eucharistic Revival**, that this is
Part #33 of the reflections on the **Eucharist**.

THE THEOLOGICAL SENSE OF THE LITURGY. Those
who do not come to **holy Mass** each week cheat
themselves of this primary source of countless
spiritual graces; but it is not enough to simply
'show up' either! The liturgical reforms of the
Second Vatican Council strove to help us enjoy
God's blessings by promoting the "**full, conscious,
active, and fruitful participation**" [Cf. *Sacrosanctum
Concilium* #11] of all who come to **holy Mass** and
other rites. This not only demands that we strive
to understand the meaning of the **Scriptures**,
actions, symbols and signs of our rites and
rituals; we must also have the proper mindset
and disposition to benefit from them.

'**Desiderio Desideravi**' highlights two heresies
that have long plagued the **Church**: **Gnosticism**
and **Pelagianism**. **Gnosticism** rears its ugly head
in those who have an "I know better," or "This is
the **ONLY** way," or "If you knew what I knew"
attitude. They dismiss or even disparage official
rubrics, norms or options like receiving **Holy
Communion** in the hand - or standing to do so as
mandated by the **USA's Bishops**. They twist or
ignore rubrics and impose their own innovations.
Such abuses corrupt the **Church's** unity and
violate **Christ's Last Supper** request that "**all may
be one.**" [John 17:21] Some guidelines that govern
our **Rites** permit personal preferences, but the
essentials are non-negotiable; we are obligated
to know the difference! Don't be a **Gnostic**!

Pelagius, an un-ordained, lay **Monk** who lived
from the 350's to 410's; was a highly educated
theologian. His teachings were quite orthodox,
but he 'crossed the line' by implying that our
fallen human nature was not so bad and that we
could 'redeem' ourselves - which means we had

no need for a **Redeemer**! This, in turn, reduced
Jesus to a good role model or teacher, and the
Sacraments to unnecessary rites devoid of any
power to save us. The **Church** also condemned
the other extreme that sees us as totally corrupt
and unredeemable; that heresy is known as
Jansenism, named after the French **Bishop Jan-
sen** [1585-1638], who believed that our free will
was so obliterated by **Original Sin** that we play
NO role in our salvation. A similar heresy is in
Calvinism, named for **John Calvin**, [1509-1564]
who went even further than **Martin Luther** [1483-
1546] by professing that **God** pre-determines who
is saved and who is not - rendering spiritual
works, like celebrating **Sacraments**, useless.

SACRED LITURGY: A REMEDY FOR HERESIES. The
rubrics for the **holy Mass** and other **Rites** help
keep us from becoming subjective - that is, if we
properly, though not slavishly, follow them. For
the rubrics remind us that it is a communal
celebration, belonging to no one in particular,
even a **Pope**! We 'subject' ourselves to it; we do
not create or determine it. And it is properly
balanced to keep us from slipping into heresy.
How so?

Although we are unworthy, **God** still invites us.
So, we usually begin with a **Penitential Act** that
seeks forgiveness and mercy; if need be, we go
to **Confession** first. Most **Mass** orations are in the
plural since we come together, not as
individuals, but as a community of unworthy yet
redeemed sinners. We need not grasp in the
dark alone, by ourselves, as we seek to get
through life and into heaven! We have each
other, the **Church** and her **Sacraments**, and a
weekly gathering to guide and direct, console
and nourish us!

"... **SAY THE WORD AND MY SOUL SHALL BE
HEALED.**" Before receiving **Holy Communion**, we
communally admit, "**We need help!**" for the
Church puts the words of a **Roman Centurion** on
our lips: "**Lord, I am not worthy to have you en-
ter under my roof; only say the word ...**" [Matthew
8:8]

And **Jesus** does say, "**Come,**" don your wedding
gown [get baptized, that is]; "**Repent,**" [go to
Confession if necessary] and remember: "**I have
earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you
before I suffer.**" [Luke 22:15]

In Christ,

Father Mark

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