



From the Pastor
16th Sunday in
Ordinary Time - A
July 23, 2023

HAVE WE LOST THE SENSE OF MYSTERY? Reflection #5 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] challenges us to reflect on our attitude and outlook during the **Sacred Liturgy**. '**Desiderio Desideravi**' dovetails so perfectly with our years-long series on the **2022-2025 National Eucharistic Revival**, that this is **Part #34** of the reflections on the **Eucharist**.

THE MYSTERY OF FAITH. The **Holy Father** admits that a common criticism of the '**New** Mass, as some erroneously call it, as it is the same **Mass** in a revised form, caused a loss in the '**sense of mystery**.' The **Pope** accepts this critique - **IF** we are speaking about those who take sacred rites for granted, disregard rubrics, become the center of attention, or apathetically lead [the clergy] or assist at [the laity] the **holy Mass** and other **Rites**. However, he takes it as a compliment if what is being criticized is how much more understandable and approachable - and how we can more easily be active participants in sacred rites, rather than spectators unable to see what was often out-of-sight and veiled in a language unknown to most.

Here is what the '**Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy**' [Sacrosanctum Concilium], promulgated by **Saint Pope Paul VI**, declared on December 4, 1963: "**Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy.**" Achieving this goal requires much more than understanding words and gestures, signs and symbols, colors and music; and it demands more than carefully fulfilling each rubric. The assembly rightly deserves that those who organize and lead the **Sacred Liturgy** offer what is proper; it is their right to receive what has been handed onto us so that we can accurately hand it on to the next generation. However, even if every rubric was painstakingly executed, and the **Ordained** and **Lay Ministers** who lead the **Rites** were exemplary in fulfilling their duties - even

that would not be enough!
AMAZEMENT BEFORE THE PASCHAL MYSTERY IS ESSENTIAL! When was the last time you were filled with 'wonder and awe' - left speechless, your breath taken away, your heart moved at its deepest level? It would be unrealistic to hope to have these reactions at every **Consecration** and **Reception of Holy Communion**, but if we are never 'caught up' by what we celebrate, are we truly present to the **Lord's Real Presence**? If we believe that what **Jesus** promised - to be with us always - is fulfilled in the **Eucharist**, how could our hearts NOT be burning within us, and our minds NOT be blown away by that reality? And if that is what happens at every **holy Mass**, why would we need to be 'obligated' to be there? How could we miss such a miraculous event?

A baby does not know the difference between a Dixie Cup and a Waterford goblet; a child passes on what is nutritiously healthy and chooses ice cream, candy bars and other junk foods. Are we that immature in our **Faith** that we equate - or worse, even opt for - sports or shopping, a few extra zzz's or a walk in the park, or any other activity, over experiencing - and receiving - **Christ** in the **Eucharist**? Sadly, there are some who do not take the next step to become **Catholic** so they can be welcomed to the **Eucharistic Banquet** because of what their family or friends, neighbors or coworkers might say. That surely saddens the **Saints** who endured persecution and even martyrdom to enjoy what so many - myself included - often take for granted!

RELIVE HOLY WEEK EACH WEEK. In her wisdom and deep concern for her children, **Holy Mother Church** enables us to 'relive' **Holy Week** each week! We process into **Jerusalem**, as the first disciples did on **Palm Sunday**, to be with the **Lord** at His **Last Supper**, **Passion** and **Death**, and **Resurrection**. For all of these events are made present in the **sacred Rites** we celebrate at **holy Mass**. This is the **Paschal Mystery** we are called to participate in; this is the meal **Jesus** earnestly desires to eat with us; this is the encounter with **God** that enables us to face each week's challenges until we are seated at heaven's **Eternal Banquet!** Don't miss it for anything!

In Christ,

Father Mark

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