



From the Pastor
1st Sunday of Advent - A
November 27, 2022

EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL. This is part 16 of our series on the USA's Bishops' document **The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church**. Past articles on this **Revival**, the whole document, and a video

of the talk at our Parish on the Eucharist, are on our Parish website: stjustin.org; click on **Eucharistic Revival Articles**.

A quote from the Common Preface IV

“For, although you have no need of our praise, yet our thanksgiving is itself your gift, since our praises add nothing to your greatness but profit us for salvation.”

EUCCHARIST MEANS THANKSGIVING. This weekend, as we continue to celebrate the secular **Feast of Thanksgiving**, we take a break from a 10 - part reflection on **Eucharist Adoration Outside of Mass** [next week is the last one] and return to a 'walk-through' explanation of the above-mentioned Bishops' document. We left off, back on September 18, with a series of articles on **Part I: Eucharist as THE GIFT**; now we move onto **Part II: OUR RESPONSE**. And as our parents [hopefully!] taught us from an early age: our **RESPONSE** to receiving a **GIFT** must be to express our **THANKS**.

EVERYTHING IS A GIFT FROM GOD. First, we must begin by admitting that **ALL** is a **GIFT**: our life, our world, and everything in it! For only **God** can create from nothing; so ultimately, everything is a gift that must be used as **God**, the **Gift-Giver**, intended. We use the word 'grace' for all the **unearned**, **unpaid for**, **undeserved**, and **unmerited** gifts **God** so freely gives us. What does **God** ask in return for His countless, gracious gifts?

A verse from the hymn 'All Good Gifts' sums it up perfectly: “**And all that we can offer, your boundless love imparts; the gifts to you most pleasing are humble, thankful hearts.**” Once our hearts are moved by such a sense of gratitude, the rest of our body must follow. We must love as **Christ** loves; give as totally and as freely as **Christ** gives; seek to strive to know and to do the **Father's** will as **Christ** did. And when we are NOT like **Christ**, we must seek **God's pardon** and **forgiveness** for forgetting we are **stewards** or **caretakers** - not **owners** - of **God's** gracious gifts.

The **holy Mass** is the greatest act of thanksgiving, since through it, we offer back to **God** His **greatest Gift** to us: our **Lord Jesus Christ**, truly present in the **Eucharist** - so our regular, active participation at **holy Mass** is essential. For as the psalmist asks, “**How can I repay the LORD for all the great good done for me? I will raise the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.**” [Psalm 116:12-13] No wonder the **Church** makes this the **Psalm** we sing at **Holy Thursday's Mass of the Lord's Supper**, for we best fulfill this command by following the **Lord Jesus'** example and command to “**do this [the Eucharist] in memory of me.**” [Luke 22:19]

The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church document then makes two points. 1] As the 1960's **Second Vatican Council** stated: to properly give thanks for the **Eucharist**, everyone should “**take a full, conscious, and active part in the liturgical celebration.**” This means that we must be **conscious** of what we are doing, what is happening, and **Who** is present in the sacred mysteries. We must also engage our minds, our hearts, and our bodies by joining in the communal actions of sitting, standing, kneeling, bowing, other gestures - and in moments of silence. We must actively listen to the prayers and the homily, join in singing hymns, reciting creeds and other prayers - even if we have said them or have heard them - countless times before.

The document calls every **Ordained** and **Lay Minister** who leads or serves at **holy Mass** to remember that they are **servants**, not **owners**, of liturgical **Rites**. One of the reasons the clergy wear special vestments is to help us - and you - remember it is not us **personally** who do or say all we do or say - but **Christ** who, by our **Ordination**, works **in** and **through** us. As Pope Francis recently wrote to the Bishops of the world: “**I ask you to be vigilant in ensuring that every liturgy be celebrated with decorum and fidelity to the liturgical books promulgated after Vatican Council II, without the eccentricities that can easily degenerate into abuses.**” It then calls for the ongoing formation of clergy and laity who serve in any liturgical role so we can more closely achieve every liturgical ideal. How can we better offer our **thanksgiving** to the **Lord** than when we gather for the **Most Holy Eucharist**?

In Christ

Father Mark