



From the Pastor
December 11, 2022
3rd Sunday of
Advent - A
Gaudete [Rejoice] Sunday

OUR RESPONSE TO THE GREAT GIFT OF EUCHARIST.

On this **Gaudete** or **Rejoicing** Sunday, we offer part 18 of our series on the

USA Bishops' **National Eucharistic Revival** document **The Mystery of the Eucharist in the Life of the Church**. In this article we will reflect on how we can best **RESPOND** to **God's Great Gift of Eucharist**. For past articles on this Revival, the whole document, and a video of a talk offered at our Parish on the Eucharist, go to our parish website – stjustin.org - and click on **Eucharistic Revival Articles**.

A Quote from Saint [Mother] Teresa of Calcutta

"When you look at the crucifix, you understand how much Jesus loved you then. When you look at the Sacred Host, you understand how much Jesus loves you now."

RESPONDING TO GOD'S GIFTS. We all know, from an early age, what I will call a **Gift-Receiver's Routine**. After we express our thanks for the gift, we unwrap, open or set it up; then we read the manual or instructions, insert the batteries and charge it up; then we use it and enjoy it. [And it never hurts to say 'thank you' again and again to the gift giver.] What we do - or should do - after receiving a **Christmas** or birthday, anniversary or graduation gift - or any gift - we must also do with the gifts given to us from **God**, especially the **Great Gift of the Most Holy Eucharist**.

Our Church's three-year **National Eucharistic Revival** intends to do all this and more - for those who actively take part in it. As we have mentioned in previous articles, it begins with coming to a deeper realization of **Our Lord's True Presence in the Eucharist**. As the quote above from **Saint Mother Teresa** reminds us: what **Jesus** once did on the **Cross** for us is truly made present again and again in the **Sacred Host** we adore and receive. That **Jesus** is willing to come to us and enter into us, with all the graces or gifts He won for us by His **Passion, Death and Resurrection**, is truly mind-boggling and amazing!

Going back to my initial analogy about gifts, we must ask ourselves: How often do I thank **Jesus** for the **Great Gift of Eucharist**? How often do I avail myself to receive this **Great Gift**? How well do I properly prepare myself to welcome **Jesus** as a **Guest** within me? Do I ready myself to receive Him by confessing my sins, doing penance, and performing acts of mercy or charity? Do I fast on special days of fasting and for one hour [medicine and water are always permitted!] before coming to receive **Holy Communion**?

Catholicism celebrates our unseen, invisible **God** and His graces with seen or visible signs and symbols. What does my outward appearance: my dress, my punctuality, and my active participation say about how important and central coming to receive **Jesus** is to me? Do I make time for **holy Mass** when I am away on vacation or for business, when I schedule sporting, hobby, workout, and other events?

Technically, the adage, "**Grace builds on nature**." is incorrect; for **God** acts first, gifting us with so many 'graces' before we do anything! However, we must cooperate with **God's** gifts of grace if we hope to benefit from them; **God** forces nothing on us. We must be continuously open to learning more about, experiencing, and sharing **God's** gifts of grace with others. Do I avail myself to all that the **Church** offers, through her parishes or dioceses, publications or books, for ongoing faith formation? Do I subscribe to any **Catholic** periodicals, newspapers, websites, cable or radio stations? Do I even take advantage of what our Parish PAYS FOR through FORMED: the online **Catholic** website that offers videos, talks and other resources - for which all you must do is register and enjoy? [It is our gift to ourselves!]

FULL, ACTIVE, CONSCIOUS PARTICIPATION. As our Bishops remind us, "The Second Vatican Council taught that, in order to give thanks properly in the celebration of the Mass, we should '**take a full, conscious, and active part in the liturgical celebration**.'" How can you get more involved in the sacred liturgy? What will you do to better understand and celebrate these most sacred rites?

In Christ

Father Mark