



From the Pastor
4th Sunday
of Advent - A
December 18, 2022

THE GREAT GIFT OF EUCHARIST. Today we offer part 19 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 reflect on how we can best **RESPOND** to **God's Great Gift of Eucharist**. For past articles on this **Revival**, a link to the document, and a video of a talk on the Eucharist, go to our parish website – stjustin.org - and click on **Eucharistic Revival Articles**. We'll resume our series **after Christmastime** so we can devote the next few articles to those 'coming home' to the **Church** in these grace-filled days.

A Quote from Pope Saint John Paul II

"... by sharing in the sacrifice of the Cross, the Christian partakes of Christ's self-giving love and is equipped and committed to live this same charity in all his thoughts and deeds."

RESPONDING TO GOD'S GIFTS. Last week, we reflected on two of the primary ways we must respond to **Christ's Gift of Himself** in the **Eucharist: Thanksgiving** and **Worship**. In the weeks before and during **Lent**, we will reflect on **Conversion**: our need to **respond** by being changed by what - or rather, changed by Who we receive in **Holy Communion**. And it is most appropriate and timely that as we enter what is often called the '**Season of Giving**,' today's topic is responding by being **Transformation in Christ**. If we are truly transformed in **Christ**, then we will graciously give of ourselves to others, especially those in need, as **Jesus** so freely gave - and continues to give Himself - to all who call upon Him.

In this section of the document, the **Church** offers role models and exemplary teachers who, having received **Christ's Real Presence** in the **Eucharist**, **became Christ's** presence in the world. While none of us will have the tremendous impact of **Pope John Paul II** or **Mother Teresa**, we can have an impact - not only on those we reach out to help, but on those who witness our generosity. For when others see us giving to the poor: from bringing non-perishables to a food pantry basket, tossing change in a collection bin, spending time at a homeless shelter, we can move other's hearts !

FAITH WITHOUT ACTION IS DEAD. In a world with so many needs, we can easily become overwhelmed by **Christ's** mandate to do what we can for the poor. No one wants to hear those dreadful words, "**Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.**" [Matthew 25:45b] That is why actively participating in weekly **Mass** and regularly receiving **Holy Communion** are essential. For gathering under the image of **Christ crucified**, which is required wherever **holy Mass** is celebrated, we are reminded on the selfless love with which **Jesus** loves us. Through **The Liturgy of the Word**, we are given the 'marching orders' that prod us to perform good deeds. Through **The Liturgy of the Eucharist**, **Christ** enters us and graces us with the supernatural power we need to perform supernatural deeds. And then, sent forth with **God's** blessing, we must put of faith into action.

ITS A 'ME & GOD' MOMENT: A DANGEROUS NOTION. For over a century, the **Church** has stressed in her documents the **COMMUNAL** nature of our **Faith** and its **Rites**. No **Sacrament** exists solely for the personal benefit of those who partake in that **Sacrament**. We are **Baptized** into **Christ's Body**, the **Church**, a community of disciples; through **Confirmation** the **Holy Spirit** helps us activate our **God-given** gifts; we are reconciled to **God** and one another in **Penance**; some are **Ordained** to serve **God's People**; we are **Anointed** in the hope of being restored to our place in the earthly **Church** or welcomed into the **Communion of Saints**; and **Matrimony** makes the home of a husband and wife [even those not blessed with children] a 'branch' [albeit not tax exempt!] of the local **Parish**.

However, it is the **Most Blessed Sacrament**, the **Eucharist** that uniquely forms and fortifies the **Church** to be what she receives. It is not by accident that she obligates us to join, at least once a week, in the ultimate 'breadline.' For all of us, rich or poor, male or female, young or old, healthy or ill, all of us, need to be transformed in and by **Christ**. Each time you come forward to receive **Christ**, strive to see in those joining you in the **Communion Procession** a sister or brother in need of the help only you can give.

In Christ

Father Mark