

**The Word Made Flesh:**  
**Priests as Catalysts for the Church's Eucharistic Revival**  
*Understanding, Imitating and Conforming Our Life To What We Celebrate*



**Fr. Roger J. Landry • Clergy Days for the Diocese of Green Bay**  
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# National Eucharistic Revival

- Three-year-plus initiative of the Church in the United States, to renew Eucharistic knowledge, faith, amazement, love, life and witness.
- Context with regard to belief in the Eucharist, frequency of Mass attendance and other troubling trends.
- Various phases:
  - Dioceses (June 19, 2022 to June 11, 2023)
  - Parishes (June 11, 2023 to July 17, 2024)
  - National Eucharistic Congress July 17-21, 2024 in Indianapolis.
  - Mission – July 21, 2024 to June 8, 2025
- But the most important phase is *personal*.



# National Eucharistic Revival

- The U.S. Bishops have appointed 56 priests as National Eucharistic Preachers to help spur the whole initiative.
- But every priest is meant to be an effective and credible Eucharistic Preacher, by word and witness, drawing people to Christ who works through them.
- As soon as we were ordained priests, we were told, “Receive the oblation of the holy people to be offered to God. Understand what you will do, imitate what you will celebrate and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s cross.”
- Priestly life is meant to become a commentary on the words of consecration. Our whole life is supposed to find its source, summit, root and center in Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.



# Our Time Together

- To aid in that understanding, imitation, and conformity, we will focus during our time together on:
  - A mystagogical and practical walk-through Mass so that we might reflect how to enter more contemplatively into the prayer of Jesus the High Priest, as priests and disciples.
  - An examination of the quality of our priestly prayer and adoration.
  - A focus on living a more Eucharistic Life overflowing in charity and courageously witnessing to the gift of the Eucharist with others.
  - Throughout our time I will take up the witness of several saints whose priestly example and intercession can help us become truly Eucharistic priests who give witness to the command to understand, imitate and conform.



## Eucharistic Witness: The Ven. Francis Xavier Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan

- Bishop of Hue, Archbishop of Saigon, imprisoned for 13 years (1975-88) by the Communists in Vietnam, 9 in isolation.
- Eventually released and became VP, then President of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace.
- “Please send me a little wine as medicine for my stomacheache.”
- Each day during isolation, as close as he could to what he thought was 3 pm, he would celebrate Mass from memory with three drops of wine, one drop of water and a few breadcrumbs on his hand.
- “Those were the most beautiful Masses of my life.”



## Eucharistic Witness: The Ven. Francis Xavier Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan

- In a reeducation camp with 50 other crowded prisoners, he would celebrate at 9:30 pm over his bed with Catholics watching guard.
- Under a mosquito net, he would distribute tiny pieces of hosts to Catholics.
- Then he would wrap tiny fragments of the Eucharist in the aluminum wrappers of cigarette packs, keep one in his shirt pocket and distribute others to faithful Catholic prisoners.



## Eucharistic Witness: The Ven. Francis Xavier Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan

- *Road to Hope: A Gospel from Prison*, his “five loaves and two fish.”
- “If you appreciate the value of the Eucharistic Celebration, you will participate in it no matter how far away or difficult it is. The greater the sacrifice involved, the more evident is your love for God.”
- “The whole of the Lord’s life was directed toward Calvary. The whole of our life should be oriented toward the Eucharistic celebration.”
- “If you are all alone in some remote place or in the darkness of a prison, turn your mind toward the altars of the world where our Lord Jesus Christ is offering his sacrifice. Unite yourself to the Eucharistic sacrifice. Then your heart will be filled to overflowing with consolation and courage.”



## Eucharistic Witness: The Ven. Francis Xavier Cardinal Nguyen Van Thuan

- “If you have lost everything but still have the Blessed Sacrament, you actually still have everything, because you have the Lord of heaven present here on earth.”
- “The Eucharist shapes Christians.”
- “As the drop of water put into the chalice mingles with the wine, so your life should become one with Christ’s.”
- “Holy people are those who continue to live the Eucharistic celebration throughout the day.”





# Practical Preparation for Mass

- The focus on Cardinal Van Thuan's celebration of the Mass in prison can help us to examine the love we bring to the altar in ordinary times.
- Preparation for Mass is key. As we see in Mk 14, Jesus took the practical preparation for Mass very seriously.
- Mk 14: On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, "The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?" Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there." The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.
- It's an indication for us to take preparations seriously as well.



# Mystagogical Preparation

- In *Sacramentum Caritatis* 64, Pope Benedict stresses the need for “mystagogical preparation” of priest and faithful.
- “The Church's great liturgical tradition teaches us that fruitful participation in the liturgy requires that one be personally conformed to the mystery being celebrated, offering one's life to God in unity with the sacrifice of Christ for the salvation of the whole world.”
- “The faithful [must] be helped to make their interior dispositions correspond to their gestures and words. Otherwise, however carefully planned and executed our liturgies may be, they would risk falling into a certain ritualism.”
- “Hence the need to provide an education in eucharistic faith capable of enabling the faithful to live personally what they celebrate.” Priests must understand what they are doing to pass it on to others effectively.



# Mystagogical Preparation

- There is a need, Pope Benedict said, for “a mystagogical approach to catechesis, which would lead the faithful to understand more deeply the mysteries being celebrated.”
- “Given the close relationship between the *ars celebrandi* and an *actuosa participatio*, it must first be said that the best catechesis on the Eucharist is the Eucharist itself, celebrated well.”
- The mystagogy involves three elements:
  - It interprets the rites in light of the events of salvation history, in accordance with the Church's living tradition.
  - It reveals the meaning of the signs contained in the rites.
  - It brings out the significance of the rites for Christian life in all its dimensions so that all of life can be transformed.



# Important Principles

- *Ars Celebrandi – mens concordet voci.*
- *Actuosa participatio*
- SC 52: The Second Vatican Council rightly emphasized the active, full and fruitful participation of the entire People of God in the eucharistic celebration. ... Some misunderstanding has occasionally arisen concerning the precise meaning of this participation. The word **‘participation’ does not refer to mere external activity during the celebration, ... [but rather] greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life.** Sacrosanctum Concilium encouraged the faithful to take part not as “strangers or silent spectators” but as participants in the sacred action, conscious of what they are doing, **actively and devoutly.**”
- SC 55: *Actuosa participatio* involves “constant conversion,” “recollection and silence,” “fasting,” “when necessary, sacramental confession,” and an “effort to participate actively in the life of the Church.”



# Important Principles

- *Lex orandi, lex credendi* – The law of prayer is the law of faith, pointing to the importance of well written and translated prayers, as well as to the importance of praying the Mass.
- *Beauty* – SC 35: “The beauty of the liturgy is **part of this mystery**; it is a sublime expression of God's glory and, in a certain sense, a glimpse of heaven on earth. ... Beauty is not mere decoration, but rather an **essential element of the liturgical action**, since it is an attribute of God himself and his revelation.” This involves beauty in architecture, art, music, liturgical texts, homiletics.
- *Christus totus* – The Mass is the prayer of the whole Christ, Bride and Body.
- *Unity of the Celebration* – SC 44: “There is ... the inherent unity of the rite of Mass. Both in catechesis and in the actual manner of celebration, one must avoid giving the impression that the two parts of the rite are merely juxtaposed. The liturgy of the word and the Eucharistic liturgy, with the rites of introduction and conclusion, "are so closely interconnected that they form but one single act of worship.” Everything must be connected to Christ.



# Practical Preparation for Mass

- Stoking our desire and hunger
- Preparing to encounter Christ, enter into his prayer as well as his suffering, death, and risen life, to become the tabernacle of his incarnate presence.
- This should take place whether celebrating Mass in small chapels, huge Cathedrals, World Youth Days, and, if necessary, hotel rooms.
- The helpfulness of prayers of preparation.



# St. Thomas Aquinas' Prayer of Preparation

“Almighty and everlasting God, behold I come to the Sacrament of your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: I come as one infirm to the physician of life, as one unclean to the fountain of mercy, as one blind to the light of everlasting brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth.

“Therefore, I implore the abundance of your measureless bounty that you would vouchsafe to heal my infirmity, wash my uncleanness, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty and clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, with such reverence and humility, with such sorrow and devotion, with such purity and faith, with such purpose and intention as may be profitable to my soul's salvation.

“Grant to me, I pray, the grace of receiving not only the Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood, but also the grace and power of the Sacrament. O most gracious God, grant me so to receive the Body of your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which He took from the Virgin Mary, as to merit to be incorporated into His Mystical Body, and to be numbered amongst His members.

“O most loving Father, give me grace to behold forever your beloved Son with His face at last unveiled, whom I now intend to receive under the sacramental veil here below. Amen.”



# Vesting Prayers

- Washing Hands – “Give strength to my hands, Lord, to wipe away every stain, so that I may be able to serve you in purity of mind and body.”
- Amice – “Lord, set the helmet of salvation on my head to fend off all the assaults of the devil.”
- Alb – “Purify me, Lord, and cleanse my heart so that, washed in the Blood of the Lamb, I may enjoy eternal joys.”
- Cincture – “Lord, fasten the cincture of purity around me and extinguish my earthly desires, so that the virtue of continence and chastity may dwell within me.”
- Stole – “Lord, restore the stole of immortality, which I lost through the actions of our first parents, and although I am unworthy to approach your sacred mysteries, may I gain eternal joy.”
- Chasuble – “Lord, you have said: My yoke is sweet and my burden is light. Grant that I may carry your yoke well so as to obtain your grace.”





## Pope Benedict on the Vesting Prayers (2007 Chrism Homily)

- “With regard to what happens in Baptism, St Paul explicitly uses the image of clothing: ‘For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ’ (Gal 3:27). This is what is fulfilled in Baptism: we put on Christ, he gives us his garments and these are not something external. It means that we enter into an existential communion with him, that his being and our being merge, penetrate one another.”
- “‘It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me,’ is how Paul himself describes the event of his Baptism (Gal 2:20). Christ has put on our clothes: the pain and joy of being a man, hunger, thirst, weariness, our hopes and disappointments, our fear of death, all our apprehensions until death. And he has given to us his ‘garments.’”
- “Just as in Baptism an ‘exchange of clothing’ is given, an exchanged destination, a new existential communion with Christ, so also in priesthood there is an exchange: in the administration of the sacraments, the priest now acts and speaks ‘*in persona Christi*.’ In the sacred mysteries, he does not represent himself and does not speak expressing himself, but speaks for the Other, for Christ.”



## Pope Benedict on the Vesting Prayers (2007 Chrism Homily)

- “Thus, in the Sacraments, he dramatically renders visible what being a priest means in general: ... I am here so that you may make use of me. We put ourselves at the disposal of the One who ‘died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves’ (2 Cor 5:15). ... In being with him we can truly be ‘for all.’”
- “*In persona Christi*: at the moment of priestly ordination, the Church has also made this reality of ‘new clothes’ visible and comprehensible to us externally through being clothed in liturgical vestments. In this external gesture she wants to make the interior event visible to us, as well as our task which stems from it: putting on Christ; giving ourselves to him as he gave himself to us.”
- “This event, the ‘putting on of Christ,’ is demonstrated again and again at every Holy Mass by the putting on of liturgical vestments. Vesting ourselves in them must be more than an external event: it means entering ever anew into the ‘yes’ of our office - into that ‘no longer I’ of Baptism which Ordination to the priesthood gives to us in a new way.”



## Pope Benedict on the Vesting Prayers (2007 Chrism Homily)

- “The fact that we are standing at the altar clad in liturgical vestments must make it clearly visible to those present that we are there ‘in the person of an Other.’ Just as in the course of time priestly vestments developed, they are a profound symbolic expression of what the priesthood means.”
- “I would therefore like to explain ... the essence of the priestly ministry, interpreting the liturgical vestments themselves, which are precisely intended to illustrate what ‘putting on Christ,’ what speaking and acting *in persona Christi*, mean.”
- “Putting on priestly vestments [is] accompanied by prayers that [help] us understand better each single element of the priestly ministry.”



## Pope Benedict on the Vesting Prayers (2007 Chrism Homily)

- Amice – It is “a symbol of the discipline of the senses and of thought necessary for a proper celebration of Holy Mass. My thoughts must not wander here and there due to the anxieties and expectations of my daily life [or distracted] by what there, inside the church, might accidentally captivate the eyes and ears. My heart must open itself docilely to the Word of God and be recollected in the prayer of the Church, so that my thoughts may receive their orientation from the words of the proclamation and of prayer. And the gaze of my heart must be turned toward the Lord who is in our midst. If I am with the Lord, then, with my listening, speaking and acting, I will also draw people into communion with him.”

# Pope Benedict on the Vesting Prayers



- **Alb and Stole** – The texts of the prayer expressed by the *alb* and the *stole* both move in the same direction. They call to mind the festive robes that the father gave to the prodigal son who had come home dirty, in rags. When we approach the liturgy to act in the person of Christ, we all realize how distant we are from him; how much dirt there is in our lives. He alone can give us festive robes, can make us worthy to preside at his table, to be at his service. Thus, the prayers also recall the words of Revelation, [which ...] says that they had washed their robes in the Blood of the Lamb and thus made them white and shining like light (cf. *Rv* 7: 14). It is this love [of the Crucified Christ] that makes our dirty clothes white, ... that transforms us, despite all our shadows, into ‘light in the Lord.’ By putting on the alb we must remind ourselves: he suffered for me, too. But with the garment of light which the Lord gave us in Baptism and in a new way in priestly Ordination, we can also think of the wedding apparel [the clothes of love] that he tells us about in the parable of God's banquet. ... we must ask ourselves whether we are wearing these clothes of love.”

# Pope Benedict on the Vesting Prayers

- Chasuble – “The traditional prayer when one puts on the *chasuble* sees it as representing the yoke of the Lord which is imposed upon us as priests. It recalls the words of Jesus, who invites us to take his yoke upon us and to learn from him who is ‘gentle and lowly in heart’ (Mt 11: 29). Taking the Lord's yoke upon us means first of all: learning from him. It means always being ready to go to his school. From him we must learn gentleness and meekness: the humility of God who shows himself in his being a man. ... At times we would like to say to Jesus: ‘Lord, your yoke is far from light.’ Indeed, it is tremendously heavy in this world. But then looking at the One who bore everything – who tried out on himself obedience, weakness, suffering, all the darkness – then these complaints of ours fade. His yoke is that of loving with him. And the more we love him and with him become loving people, the lighter becomes his seemingly burdensome yoke. Let us pray to him to help us become with him people who are loving, thereby to increasingly experience how beautiful it is to take up his yoke.”





## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: Opening Prayers

- **Sign of the Cross** – Trinitarian Love and Structure, Picking up our Cross to Follow Christ.
- **Penitential Rite** – Confiteor (I have greatly sinned by my own most grievous fault and need the prayers of the whole Church) and Trinitarian structure of the *Kyrie*.
- **Gloria** – We glorify God like the angels on Christmas morning. We praise God and ask him to receive our prayer (for mercy).
- **Collect** – *Ars celebrandi*. Meaning of Amen.



## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: Liturgy of the Word

- SC 45. “When the Sacred Scriptures are read in the Church, God himself speaks to his people, and Christ, present in his own word, proclaims the Gospel.”
- The structure of the readings
- SC 45. The faithful should be helped to appreciate the riches of Sacred Scripture found in the lectionary through pastoral initiatives, liturgies of the word and reading in the context of prayer (*lectio divina*), ... the Liturgy of the Hours, ... and vigil celebrations. By praying the Psalms, the Scripture readings and the readings drawn from the great tradition, we can come to a deeper experience of the Christ-event and the economy of salvation, which in turn can enrich our understanding and participation in the celebration of the Eucharist.”





## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: The Homily

- PO 4, in a paragraph in which it says that priests “have the primary duty of proclaiming the Gospel of God to all,” says, “it is to **conversion and holiness that they exhort all men.**”
- VD 59: The homily is a means of bringing the scriptural message to life in a way that helps the faithful to **realize that God’s word is present and at work in their everyday lives.** It should lead to an understanding of the mystery being celebrated, serve as a summons to mission, and prepare the assembly for the profession of faith, the universal prayer and the Eucharistic liturgy.
- EG: A liturgical homily promotes a heart-to-heart dialogue between God and his people, proclaiming the deeds of salvation and restating the demands of the covenant.



## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: The Homily's Importance

- SC 52: The homily is to be **highly esteemed as part of the liturgy itself**; in fact, at those Masses which are celebrated with the assistance of the people on Sundays and feasts of obligation, it should not be omitted except for a serious reason.
- VD 59. The homily **'is part of the liturgical action'** and is meant to foster a deeper understanding of the word of God, so that it can bear fruit in the lives of the faithful." ... The homily for Sundays and solemnities should be prepared carefully, without neglecting, whenever possible, to offer at weekday Masses *cum populo* brief and timely reflections that can help the faithful to welcome the word which was proclaimed and to let it bear fruit in their lives."
- EG 138: When preaching takes place within the context of the liturgy, it is **part of the offering** made to the Father and a **mediation of the grace** that Christ pours out during the celebration.



## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: The Homily's Importance

- US Bishops (2012): “One of the most important teachings of Vatican II in regard to preaching is the insistence that the homily is an integral part of the Eucharist itself. As part of the entire liturgical act, the homily is meant to set hearts on fire with praise and thanksgiving. It is to be a feature of the intense and privileged encounter with Jesus Christ that takes place in the liturgy. One might even say that the homilist connects the two parts of the Eucharistic liturgy as he looks back at the Scripture readings and looks forward to the sacrificial meal. This is why it is preferable that the celebrant of the Eucharistic liturgy also be the homilist.”



## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: Creed, Prayers, and Offertory

- Praying the Creed – The *fides quae* should be expressed with the *fides qua*.
- General Intercessions – Are we praying or cajoling or virtue signaling? Do we pay attention to them? There is a standard structure.
- Offertory – SC 47: “This is not to be viewed simply as a kind of ‘interval’ between the liturgy of the word and the liturgy of the Eucharist. ...This humble and simple gesture is actually very significant: in the bread and wine that we bring to the altar, all creation is taken up by Christ the Redeemer to be transformed and presented to the Father. In this way we also bring to the altar all the pain and suffering of the world, in the certainty that everything has value in God's eyes. ... God invites man to participate in bringing to fulfilment his handiwork, and in so doing, gives human labor its authentic meaning, since, through the celebration of the Eucharist, it is united to the redemptive sacrifice of Christ.”



## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: The Offertory

- Berakah – Praise of God for his gift; work of human hands
- *Logike Latreia* (Rom 12:1) – Sacrificial dimension of the Mass, *meum ac vestrum sacrificium... Suscipiat Dominus sacrificium*: praise and glory of his name, our good and good of all God's holy Church.
- EE 10. Unfortunately, alongside these lights, *there are also shadows*. ... At times one encounters an extremely reductive understanding of the Eucharistic mystery. Stripped of its sacrificial meaning, it is celebrated as if it were simply a fraternal banquet
- What do we put on the paten?



# Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: Preface and Sanctus

- Preface Dialogue and Preface
  - Prayer that the Lord be with each other
  - Lifting up our hearts to the Lord, seeking the things above
  - Giving Thanks – Right, Just, Duty, Salvation, Always and Everywhere
- Sanctus
  - Is 6: “I saw the Lord seated on a high and lofty throne, with the train of his garment filling the temple. Seraphim were stationed above. ... ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts!’ they cried one to the other. ‘All the earth is filled with his glory!’ At the sound of that cry, the frame of the door shook and the house was filled with smoke.”
  - Matt. 21: “The crowds preceding him and those following kept crying out and saying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord (Ps 118:26); hosanna in the highest.’ Hosanna = Save please!



## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: The Eucharistic Prayer

- SC 48. The Eucharistic Prayer is "the centre and summit of the entire celebration." Its importance deserves to be adequately emphasized.
- The different Eucharistic Prayers contained in the Missal have been handed down to us by the Church's living Tradition and are noteworthy for their inexhaustible theological and spiritual richness. The faithful need to be enabled to appreciate that richness
- Here the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* can help, with its list of the basic elements of every Eucharistic Prayer: thanksgiving, acclamation, epiclesis, institution narrative and consecration, anamnesis, offering, intercessions and final doxology.
- There are ten in the Missal, all of which highlight different aspects of the truths of faith.



## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: The Epiclesis

- SC 48. “In a particular way, eucharistic spirituality and theological reflection are enriched if we contemplate in the anaphora the profound unity between the **invocation of the Holy Spirit** and the institution narrative whereby "the sacrifice is carried out which Christ himself instituted at the Last Supper.” Indeed, "the Church implores the power of the Holy Spirit that the gifts offered by human hands be consecrated, that is, become Christ's Body and Blood, and that the spotless Victim to be received in communion be for the salvation of those who will partake of it”
- Two invocations at Mass. The second is to “make us an everlasting gift, one Body, one Spirit in Christ.”





# Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: The Consecration

- Most important words of all-time.
- Christ hijacks our accent to consecrate his Body and Blood. We're called not just to say them prayerfully but listen to them conscious of what is happening, understanding what we are doing.
- "Giving you thanks"
- SC 11. By his command to "do this in remembrance of me" (*Lk 22:19*; *1 Cor 11:25*), he asks us to respond to his gift and to make it sacramentally present. The Lord expresses ... his expectation that the Church ... will receive this. ... The remembrance of his perfect gift consists not in the mere repetition of the Last Supper, but in the Eucharist itself, that is, in the radical newness of Christian worship. ... The substantial conversion of bread and wine into his body and blood introduces within creation the principle of a radical change... that penetrates to the heart of all being, a change meant to set off a process which transforms reality, ... leading ultimately to the transfiguration of the entire world, to the point where God will be all in all (cf. *1 Cor 15:28*).



## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: The *Mysterium Fidei*

- Anamnesis – Unforgetting. *Zikkaron*.
- A Prayer Direct to Jesus – Hence the elimination in 2011 of stating the fact that “Christ has died, Christ has Risen, Christ will come again.”
- EE 5. “*Mysterium fidei!* - The Mystery of Faith!” The Church, while pointing to Christ in the mystery of his passion, also reveals her own mystery: *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*.”
- In Extraordinary Form, these words are mentioned within the formula of consecration of the Precious Blood.



# Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: Eucharistic Petitions and Doxology

- Eucharistic Petitions
  - Prayer for the Church, for unity, that she become one Body, one Spirit in Christ, that she be strengthened in faith and charity, become a living sacrifice in Christ.
  - Prayer for the Holy Father, Bishops, Clergy, faithful.
  - Prayer for Mercy
  - Prayer for the sanctification of the living
  - Prayer for the Dead
  - Prayer for Heaven
- Doxology
  - Summary of the entirety of Christian life –  
Through him, with him and in him, O God Almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor is yours, forever and ever!”
  - Great Amen. Affirming it.



# Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: Our Father and Embolism

- Our Father
  - We dare to say...
  - Compendium of the Gospel.
  - Seven Petition and Sequence.
  - *Epi-ousios*.
  - Early Catechumens.
- Embolism
  - Deliver us from every evil
  - Grant us peace in our day
  - Keep us free from sin and from all anxiety
  - As we await the blessed hope: the coming of our Lord Jesus



# Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: The Sign of Peace

- Prayer— Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins but on the faith of your Church, and grant her peace and unity according to your will. ... The peace of the Lord be with you always!
- Mt 5:23 – Leave gift to reconcile
- SC 49. By its nature the Eucharist is the sacrament of peace. At Mass this dimension of the eucharistic mystery finds specific expression in the sign of peace. Certainly this sign has great value (cf. *Jn* 14:27). In our times, fraught with fear and conflict, this gesture has become particularly eloquent, as the Church has become increasingly conscious of her responsibility to pray insistently for the gift of peace and unity for herself and for the whole human family. Certainly there is an irrepressible desire for peace present in every heart. ... It should be kept in mind that nothing is lost when the sign of peace is marked by a sobriety which preserves the proper spirit of the celebration, as, for example, when it is restricted to one's immediate neighbours.



# Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: Lamb of God and Communion

- Lamb of God and *Domine Non Sum Dignus*
  - Faith, humility, like the Centurion
  - How Jesus says the Word to heal us
- Rite of Communion
  - Most important moment of human life.
  - What worthy reception means – St. Justin Martyr on antecedent Sacramental, Doctrinal and Moral communion.
  - Adoring the Lord – As Saint Augustine put it: "*nemo autem illam carnem manducat, nisi prius adoraverit; peccemus non adorando* – no one eats that flesh without first adoring it; we should sin were we not to adore it."
  - Thanksgiving



## Mystagogical Walk Through the Mass: Closing Rites

- Closing Prayer and Amen – Applying the Eucharist to our daily life.
- Blessing – Trinitarian and Cruciform. Christ ascended with hands raised in blessing.
- *Ite, Missa Est* – SC 51. After the blessing, the deacon or the priest dismisses the people with the words: *Ite, missa est*. These words help us to grasp the relationship between the Mass just celebrated and the mission of Christians in the world. In antiquity, *missa* simply meant "dismissal." But in Christian usage it gradually took on a deeper meaning. The word "dismissal" has come to imply a "mission." These few words succinctly express the missionary nature of the Church. The People of God might be helped to understand more clearly this essential dimension of the Church's life, taking the dismissal as a starting point.

# Eucharistic Witness: Saint Josemaria Escriva



- St. Josemaria lived from one Mass to the next, in thanksgiving and preparation. He strove to make his whole day a continual Mass, making each day “totally Eucharistic.”
- He wrote in 1945: “In this way, closely united to Jesus in the Eucharist, we will attain a continual presence of God, in the midst of the ordinary occupations proper to each one’s situation on this earthly pilgrimage of ours, seeking our Lord at all times and in all things. ... Only thus will we be contemplative souls in the midst of the world, as our vocation demands, and we will become truly priestly souls, converting every aspect of our being into a continual praise of God.”
- Saint Josemaría taught in a practical way how to make the Mass the center of our daily life. He divided the 24 hours of the day into two parts: Until noon he lived the presence of God by concentrating on thanksgiving for the Mass that he had celebrated that morning, and after the Angelus he began to prepare himself for the next day’s Mass.



# Saint Josemaria Escriva

- He lived the holy Mass and taught others to live it as a very personal encounter with Christ, our Love, and with his whole Mystical Body, the Church: “To live the Holy Mass means to pray continually and to be convinced that, for each one of us, this is a personal meeting with God. We adore him, we praise him, we give him thanks, we atone for our sins, we are purified, we feel united in Christ with all Christians.”
- He urged everyone to live in accord with the centrality of the Eucharist in the life of the Church, channeling one’s whole existence through the Eucharistic sacrifice each day: “Keep struggling, so that the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar really becomes the center and the root of your interior life, and so your whole day will turn into an act of worship – an extension of the Mass you have attended and a preparation for the next. This will then overflow in aspirations, visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and the offering up of your professional work and your family life.”





# Saint Josemaria Escriva

- For Saint Josemaría, teaching the faithful to take part in the Eucharistic sacrifice was an essential part of every priest's ministry. "The priest should make a special effort to ensure that people know this and put it into practice. No other activity should, normally, take precedence over this task of teaching people to love and venerate the Holy Eucharist."
- "A man who fails to love the Mass, fails to love Christ. We must make an effort to 'live' the Mass with calm and serenity, with devotion and affection. And this is why I have always suspected that those who want the Mass to be over with quickly show, with this insensitive attitude, that they have not yet realized what the sacrifice of the altar means."
- "I ask all Christians to pray earnestly for us priests that we learn to perform the Holy Sacrifice in a holy way. I ask you to show a deep love for the Holy Mass and in this way to encourage us priests to celebrate it respectfully, with divine and human dignity: looking after the cleanliness of the vestments and other things used for worship, devoutly, without rushing."

# Saint Josemaria Escriva



- “Let us ask our Lord, then, to make us souls devoted to the blessed Eucharist, so that our relationship with him brings forth joy and serenity and a desire for justice. In this way we will make it easier for others to recognize Christ; we will put Christ at the center of all human activities. And Jesus’ promise will be fulfilled: ‘I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself’.
- “This is the source of the joy we feel on Holy Thursday – the realization that the Creator has loved his creatures to such an extent. Our Lord Jesus Christ, as though all the other proofs of his mercy were insufficient, institutes the Eucharist so that he can always be close to us. We can only understand up to a point that he does so because Love moves him, who needs nothing, not to want to be separated from us.”
- “When you approach the tabernacle remember that he has been waiting for you for 20 centuries.”

The Word Made Flesh:  
Priests as Catalysts for the Church's Eucharistic Revival  
*Understanding, Imitating and Conforming Our Life To What We Celebrate*



Thank You!