

Message for Eucharistic Revival—24th Sunday Yr C 2022

Last June on the feast of Corpus Christi, the feast of the Body and Blood of the Lord, we launched our process of Eucharistic Revival with a recorded message in which I emphasized that everything we do in the Church flows from our encounter with the Lord in the Eucharist. This awareness should be reflected not only just in what we say, but also in everything we do: the clothing we wear, our reverent silence before Mass and our active participation throughout Mass, including the manner in which we receive Communion—one hand flat on top of the other, or else on the tongue. I reminded you that you must be a Catholic, must be in a state of grace with no unabsolved mortal sins, and cannot be in a sexual relationship with someone to whom you are not married in the Church. Persons in one of these situations can receive a blessing instead of Communion and are encouraged to speak with a priest about their situation.

Today I would like to turn our attention to two other elements of Eucharistic Revival, namely Eucharistic Adoration and God's great mercy for us who are sinners.

Eucharistic adoration is time spent worshipping Jesus in his Eucharistic presence outside of Mass. This is something in which even those who are unable to go to Communion are able to participate. I was once in a suburban parish where they have had Eucharistic Adoration 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for over 20 years. People said, "*Your parish is mainly young families, they are so busy you'll never get all the hours covered with 2 adorers per hour.*" But quite the contrary! Young parents who participated said things like, "*That's the only hour of peace and quiet I get all week!*" And "*I bring all my frustrations and challenges to the Lord and by the time my hour is over, I'm in a much better place personally.*" And "*I thought 3:00 in the morning once a week would be impossible, but that little sacrifice has made a big difference in my life.*" So, I would like to suggest that Eucharistic Adoration is for everyone, including our teenagers and indeed this is part of the vocations story of several of our seminarians. I believe that most of our parishes should be able to offer Eucharistic Adoration on an expanded basis, especially throughout this time of Eucharistic Revival. I encourage you to make this as available as possible and I would challenge parishes to rethink security measures like codes and locked doors, which sometimes may be excessive or unduly restrictive. Sacred Heart parish in Oklahoma City is in a low-income neighborhood, and we had Eucharistic Adoration in a special chapel with unlocked doors and from 6 am to midnight and while homeless people would sometimes come in, we did not have a single troubling incident in my 5 years there. We wanted everyone to feel welcome, especially those who were dealing with troubles and felt spontaneously called to come and spend time with the Lord.

The other thing I would like to share with you today is a message about God's great mercy, right in line with the story of the Prodigal Son in today's Gospel. We encounter that mercy both in the Eucharist and in the sacrament of Reconciliation. In the course of Mass, there are several occasions where we ask for God's forgiveness, and these prayers, if prayed with a true spirit of repentance, actually gain for us forgiveness of venial sins—for instance in the Penitential Rite at the beginning of Mass when we say "*Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy*" to which the priest responds, "*may God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to eternal life.*" And then just before Communion we ask the "*Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*" to have mercy on us and grant us peace. But beyond that, we have the sacrament of Reconciliation for all sins, including mortal sins, where we experience God's mercy in an especially powerful way, just like the Prodigal Son in our Gospel. Even if we only have venial sins, we need to receive this sacrament at least once a month, so I hope that our parishes will make this sacrament increasingly available so as to meet this great spiritual need.

As I said last June, the Eucharist should draw us into Jesus' very act of self-giving, such that we increasingly give of ourselves to God and to others in union with Jesus. We offer ourselves in union with Jesus to the Father from the altar during Mass, and having done so, we proceed to offer ourselves in union with Jesus to the Father in loving service. Christ invites us to enter into his sacrificial love and then allow ourselves to become "*bread that is broken*" for others!