

# FAITH NOTES

October 8/9, 2016

Immaculate Conception/St. Anthony

- ♥ How Can I Participate More Consciously?
- ♥ The Doing of Eucharist
- ♥ God Speaks to Us Today Through The Word!

Volume I, Issue 3

## FULL, ACTIVE, AND CONSCIOUS PARTICIPATION

"Mother Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to that **full, conscious, and active participation** in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people, 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a redeemed people' (1 Pet. 2:9, 4-5) have a **right**

and **obligation** by reason of their baptism. In the restoration and promotion of the sacred liturgy the full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else, for it is the primary and indispensable source from which the faithful are to derive the true Christian Spirit" *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*14).

It has been more than fifty years since the Council Fathers expressed this hope for us as a Church, the community of disciples of Jesus Christ. We might question ourselves, "How have I grown in my understanding and appreciation of the Mass, the Eucharistic Liturgy?" "What more do I need to do in order to be a full, active, and conscious participant?"

### Save the Dates

October 13 or 15  
Eucharist

October 20 or 22  
Sacraments of Healing

October 27 or November 5  
Marriage

Parish Center  
Immaculate Conception  
Amenia

See bulletin for more information



## EUCHARIST IS THE ONLY REPEATABLE SACRAMENT OF INITIATION

Last week's "Faith Notes" explored the first two Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism and Confirmation and pointed out that neither can be repeated. Eucharist is the only repeatable

Sacrament of Initiation. Each time we do and receive Eucharist we are more deeply immersed in the Body of Christ.

At our Baptism, we were knit to Christ, never to be separated and

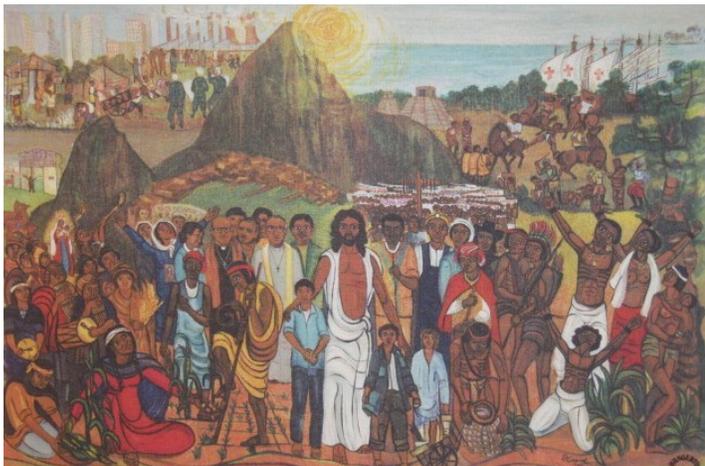
entrusted with continuing his mission in the world. How am I growing as his friend and disciple? In what ways am I living out the mission entrusted to me?

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## FAITH NOTES

## EUCHARIST AS A VERB: IN LITURGY AND LIFE



Our focus this month on the Sacraments provides a welcomed opportunity to deepen our understanding and appreciation of this mystery, central to our lives as Catholic Christians.

When we hear the word "Eucharist," most of us think of the consecrated bread and wine we receive or the reserved Blessed Sacrament that we adore. In both of these familiar associations, Eucharist is a noun. The Second Vatican Council, in its mining of the gold of our 2000 year tradition has helped us appreciate that Eucharist is also a verb.

Every Sunday when the community is gathered, we are there to listen to

God's word which is intended to move us to give thanks and praise to God for what God has done and is doing in Christ Jesus. The liturgy is the privileged place and time when our daily lives are gathered, focused, and given meaning by the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This intimate and reciprocal connection between liturgy and life must always be maintained or else we are in peril of living in a two tiered world: the divine and the human. In the following reflections I will look at Eucharist as a verb and then offer some suggestions for our doing Eucharist in and outside the Liturgy. The

first thing we need to do is ask the question, "What is it we think we are doing, when we do Eucharist?"

There are many possible answers; some more on target than others. Common among the responses I have heard is that we are present in a mystical way at the Last Supper or at Calvary. As helpful as these images might be for our undistracted presence during the Eucharistic Prayer, they do not capture the whole of what we are about. When we do Eucharist, we are engaged in **worship**, the eternal worship of God by the Son and his body. (Jean Corbin's *The Wellspring of Worship* is a helpful resource here.) I would like to offer an image for our presence and action during the Eucharist. It is taken from *Revelation 4 and 5*. Here we find the jeweler's vision of the heavenly throne room. Gathered around "the throne of One who lives forever

and ever," we find the four living creatures, the twenty-four elders, the angels, the thousands upon thousands, and the Lamb that was slain. They are caught up in the eternal worship of the One, God. When we do Eucharist, we are gathered around the Christ, to whom we were knit at Baptism, offering with him, his eternal worship of God. This image includes the Last Supper and Calvary but takes us deeper into the mystery.

Earlier we acknowledged the intimate and reciprocal connection between liturgy and life. That is, in our everyday lives we are doing Eucharist, worshiping the "Father in spirit and in truth." Said another way, we do "everyday Eucharist" when we live the way Jesus did. Here I would like to offer another image. As we look at the picture of "Christ of the Americas" on this page, we see Christ in the center, surrounded by his body whom he has forgiven, healed, liberated and reconciled. His body (we can find ourselves in there), continues his

## LITURGY AND LIFE (Continued)

works in the world. Those small, and maybe not so small, actions that we do in memory of him are the true eternal worship of God.

The focus on the **doing** of Eucharist directs our attention where it ought to be—the

worship of God. We need to worship in order to become our true selves. Without worship of the true God we are left with just ourselves. It is my hope that this brief look at Eucharist as verb will enable us to move more deeply into the mys-

tery we celebrate and be transformed more holistically and completely into the body of Christ.



Materials prepared by  
Sister Jean Flannelly, SC  
flannellysc@aol.com

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

When the way we celebrate the Eucharist (Mass) changed, we were exposed to more of the *Bible*. We now hear all four *Gospels* over a three year period instead of just *Matthew*. Additionally, we hear many more books of the Old Testament. These extremely important changes can help develop our Biblical imaginations—something that has been lost over the last three hundred years.

But more important than the greater exposure to God's word, is the deepening realization that when the Scripture is proclaimed, God is

speaking to us today through the instrument of the lector! How then ought we to prepare for and receive God's word?

A very helpful practice is to read and pray with the Scriptures for the Sunday before coming to church. Reading the scripture aloud helps us to hear it differently from just reading it silently. As we hear God's word addressed to us, the first question we ought to ask is, "What is this telling me about who God is?" Too quickly we can move into looking for lessons as to how we ought to act! In doing this we unconsciously treat the

scriptures as a "rule book" rather than a revelation of who God is and who God is for us.

Having prepared the readings before coming to church, we are in a better place to listen to God's word being addressed to us. The priest in his homily is charged with breaking open the scripture for us but we are also responsible for listening intently as God speaks to me in the particular circumstances of our lives.

Certain skills are necessary to do this and skills can be learned and developed. First off, we need to believe that God is addressing

me. This requires attention and an openness and readiness to be changed by God's invitation to become more deeply immersed in the divine life. In addition to allowing ourselves to be vulnerable to God's word, listening requires us to expect God to be acting in our lives today. This of course, gets us back to our image of God. For many we may have unconsciously bought into a secular notion that God is in God's heaven and not as we believe, that God is in the fabric of our lives calling us into, as yet, an unknown future.

# DYNAMIC MOVEMENT OF THE LITURGY



## ALLOWING OURSELVES TO BE SHAPED BY THE LITURGY

It has been observed that in the Liturgy we are saying the words and practicing the gestures of our holy ancestors in the faith in order that we might fulfill our vocation and become the saints that God invites each of us to become! The chart sketches out the underlying movement of the Liturgy.

Space does not permit commentary on all aspects of the Liturgy. For now, we will look at just the Gathering and Sending Forth Rites. The Introductory or Gathering Rites (Greeting, Penitential Rite, *Gloria*, and

Opening Prayer) are intended to bring us together as one community who listens to and acts on God's word and responds in praise and thanksgiving for all God has done and is doing.

When we come to the church building, one of the first things we do is bless ourselves with holy water. Why? We take the water and bless ourselves as a reminder of our Baptism in which we have been claimed by Christ and can join with him in his perfect worship of the Father. We bow or genuflect before we enter the pew.

Why? This action is to remind ourselves that we are about to do a daring thing—we are about to be encountered by the Risen Christ who is offering us healing, freedom, new life. We will be changed! Who of us likes change?

In the Sending Forth Rite (Closing Prayer, Blessing and Dismissal), we are sent out into the world to be and become what we have prayed and received: Jesus Christ in mission. When the priest tells us that the Mass has ended, this is our signal to remind ourselves



that we are grateful, not for the fact that the Mass is over but that we are being sent out to be Christ in our world. The only way that we can do and sustain this is by abiding in Jesus Christ (Jesus reminds us in John's *Gospel*) and allowing his Spirit to guide our choices and actions.