

From the PASTOR'S DESK



A Mystery We Become

Christians are a repetitive people. Generation after generation, the Church has celebrated the Mass, obedient to Jesus' command to *do this in memory of me*. For some, doing things over and over again makes life flat and uninteresting.

But repetition is not always a negative experience. Small children who are only learning to use their imagination love to repeat games. They call out *Again!* They delight in the present moment and want to replay it again and again.

There is another aspect to repetition. To understand someone is to observe in what way they are repetitive – what sort of things they are known for doing. The generous man is a repetitive giver. The prayerful woman is one who keeps praying, not one who prayed only once for a very long time. Repetitive actions can make us become what we do.

So, Christianity is repetitive. We have been doing the same thing for over 2,000 years. In today's second reading, St. Paul writes of the mystery that was handed down to him, and which he is handing on, namely how the Lord Jesus had anticipated the shedding of His blood by offering the cup of that blood to His disciples and had offered His body to them as food.

Calling to mind the long history of Israel: the sacrifice of Melchisedech, the Passover lamb, manna in the desert, Jesus was gathering a history of repetition together and offering a new ritual interpretation of all those events, fulfilled in the meal celebrated in the upper room by Jesus and His disciples.

And from that upper room, a new repetitiveness streams forth and flows down the generations of the Church: *Do this in memory of me*.

Do this over and over, not as a mindless chore or workplace routine, not just as a child repeating a joyful game, but as the thing that gives meaning and purpose to life: *become what you do here*.

Throughout the seasons of Lent and Easter, we celebrate the Lord Jesus, crucified, risen, ascended, and glorified. At Pentecost, the Easter mystery finds its fullness in the witness that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God and with us in the mission of the Holy Spirit. The Lord of all time is truly present in our world and in our time.

In every Mass, we encounter this real presence. The repetition? This Paschal Mystery is given to us, not just as an activity, but as a mystery we must become. We share it again and again, so that we may become the perfect offering of praise and love.

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