

## December 31, 2023

Reflect upon the bonds of love which were shared by Jesus, Mary and Joseph in their humble home in Nazareth. The Holy Family is the model of what each of our families should strive to exemplify. Jesus' presence was a continuous source of grace for Mary and Joseph.

**Reflection:** Our Lord's Eucharistic grace and presence is also available to each of our families. "Jesus is a living person always present among us. Love Jesus present in the Eucharist." St John Paul II

## December 24, 2023

The Lord wishes to unite Himself to His people in the most intimate way: by becoming our very food. This food nourishes us from life into eternity. Jesus, the Blessed Sacrament, desires to become one with us.

My prayer for you is that you may experience the sweetness of the Infant Jesus when you receive Him this Christmas in Holy Communion and with each reception of Him thereafter in the Holy Eucharist.

A blessed Christmas to you and your loved ones.

## December 17, 2023

"Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say rejoice. Indeed the Lord is near." This is our entrance antiphon today and we should note that our priest is wearing rose colored vestments to reflect the joyful nearness of the coming of Jesus' birth.

**Reflection:** One of the Advent names of Jesus is EMMANUEL. Emmanuel literally means "God is with us." God is never more with us today than through His Presence in the Holy Eucharist. When you receive Holy Communion, are you aware that you are literally not only touching God, but receiving Him into the very depths of your being? In today's Gospel St. John the Baptist says, "I am not worthy to untie his sandal straps." How far more unworthy are we to receive Jesus into our very selves?

## December 10, 2023

We hear St. John the Baptist speak to us in today's gospel of Mark 1:8. "I have baptized you with water; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is the Love which exists between the Father and the Son. We receive the Holy Spirit at Baptism and at our Confirmation. But the Holy Spirit is also present when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion. The three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity are always present to each other in the unity of our one, triune God. During the Consecration of the Blessed Sacrament, the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine and prays to the Holy Spirit. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, the transformation (transubstantiation) of the bread and wine takes place and becomes the Body and Blood of Jesus.

**Reflection:** Are you spiritually stagnant and need to be set afire with the love and gifts of the Holy Spirit? Advent is a good time to rekindle our prayer life, our penances and our reception of the sacraments. Ask the Holy Spirit, by whom Our Lady conceived the Infant Jesus, to prepare our hearts to receive Jesus anew this Christmas and with every Holy Communion we receive.

## December 3, 2023

Today is the First Sunday of Advent. We begin our spiritual preparations for the great Feast of Christmas. Frequently this season becomes a rushed hustle and bustle of "not enough time" to get everything done. In contrast to our frequently frenetic Advents, St. Padre Pio's Masses would last for several hours. The reason was his vibrant, living Faith. At the Consecration, St. Pio would not see the Holy Eucharist under the usual forms of bread and wine. Instead, this saint would see the Infant Jesus laying there in place of the Sacred Host and Precious Blood. He was so captured by the vision that he would be caught up in praise, thanksgiving and adoration of the Divine Child.

**Reflection:** This Advent might be the time to grow in OUR living Faith. We now have evening adoration of the Blessed Sacrament here at St. Ann's each Tuesday evening from 6:00-7:30 (in addition to 9:30-10:30 each Monday). Why not seize this golden opportunity to spend some time with the same Infant Jesus, whom St Pio saw in the Holy Eucharist. What a loving and intimate way to prepare ourselves for Christmas!

## November 26, 2023

Did you ever wonder how in the end you will be judged by God? In today's Gospel Our Lord gives us the answer. (Matthew 25:31-46) "Whatever you did for the least brothers of mine, you did for me." Here we find ourselves, as Pope Francis said, "in the midst of a love story." We are never closer to Jesus or more loved by Him than when we are serving others in union with Him.

**Reflection:** The union that exists between Christ and the soul through the Holy Eucharist is the closest we shall enjoy this side of heaven. It's no wonder that Christ ends this parable with the words, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." (Matthew 25: 34) How truly blessed by God we are to be able to share in such an intimate union with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

## November 19, 2023

Today's Gospel is the parable of the talents. (Matthew 25:14-30) God gives each of us unique gifts. Service is our work. The talents we've been given are ours so that by using them, we can be a gift to others. At the end of Mass, after our reception of the Holy Eucharist, the words of dismissal are to go out.

**Reflection:** Reception of the Eucharist nourishes us both spiritually and physically to go and bring Christ's love and charity to others. The last words of our Gospel today are "Come, share your Master's joy." True joy consists in giving our gifts away to our neighbor. Blessed Eurasia wrote, "It is not riches, but doing the will of God that makes our heart happy."

## November 12, 2023

Are you prepared to welcome the Bridegroom of your soul? Today's parable of the 10 virgins (Matthew 25: 1-13) challenges us to realize that we must live a life that is always prepared to enter eternity at any moment. In relation to our sublime privilege, as Catholic Christians, to receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist, how prepared are we to receive Holy Communion?

**Reflection:** "He who carries God in His heart bears Heaven with him wherever he goes." (St. Ignatius of Loyola) Once you have received Jesus worthily, you are carrying Him with you, if you remain in the state of grace. Receiving worthily requires that we not be in the state of serious, mortal sin. Jesus offers us His unfathomable Divine Mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a remedy for our sins. This merciful sacrament has a direct correlation to Christ's redemption of our souls, as a result of his brutal suffering and death on the Cross. We have been purchased at a great price.

## November 5, 2023

The focus of today's readings is on humility. To believe that Jesus is truly present in the Holy Eucharist and that the Blessed Sacrament is NOT just a symbol, we must have the virtue of humility. Bishop Erin Varden wrote, "Humility is not a coward's virtue. Its beatitude is found through an abandonment in faith that touches the heroic." Abandonment in faith is required to embrace the Church's teaching that Christ is truly present to us in the consecrated Host. What is required is a childlike simplicity and trust in the words of Jesus, "This is my Body. This is my Blood."

**Reflection:** Pause for a moment to reflect upon the humility of Jesus to be present to us in the small, consecrated Host. If we were able to see the glory of Christ, our Lord, Our God and Our Savior, who is truly present to us in the Blessed Sacrament, we would die of joy. In today's Gospel (Matthew 23:11), Jesus tells us that "the greatest among you must be your servant." Truly Christ's humility in the Blessed Sacrament teaches us by example that He stoops to be our servant in the Sacred Host and subsequently invites us to do likewise, once we have received Him.

## October 29, 2023

The two greatest Commandments are the focus of today's Gospel. (Matthew 22:34-40) Love of God is the First Commandment and Love of neighbor is the Second. Bishop Robert Barron teaches that "The goal of life is to become a participant in the Divine Nature." **Through the grace of the Holy Eucharist, Jesus transforms us into Himself.** In so doing we have a share in the Divine nature of God and becoming more like God, we are enabled to love our neighbor more and more.

**Reflection:** This is one of the amazing transcendent gifts of the Blessed Sacrament. We should never forget this grace of Holy Communion. St. Peter Julian Eymard wrote, "Receive Communion often and Jesus will change you into Himself."

## October 22, 2023

Rendering to God what belongs to God is the subject of this weekend's Gospel (Matthew 22: 15-21) What do we owe God? The Church teaches that we owe God "latria", which is worship. The most profound act of worship is the Holy Mass. The Mass is the Sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary in an unbloody manner. We stand at the foot of the Cross with Mary and St. John at each Mass we attend. How can we ever repay Our Lord for the Pascal Mystery of His Passion, Death and Resurrection which has purchased for us our personal salvation?

**Reflection:** The past week on October 19th the Church celebrated the Feast of the North American Martyrs: St. Isaac Jogues, St. Jean de Brebeuf and their companions. These brave Jesuits offered their very own martyrdom for the conversion of souls. They rendered to God the ultimate gift of their lives in love of God and neighbor. What a courageous example of giving back totally to God all that He had given to them. This heroic virtue is not possible without the graces of the Holy Eucharist.

## October 15, 2023

"The feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy to come." With these words from the parable of today's Mass, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to the king who gave a wedding feast for his son. (Matthew 22:1-14) What lesson is Our Lord teaching us about the importance of being prepared to attend Holy Mass and to receive Him in the Holy Eucharist?

**Reflection:** To receive Jesus absent mindedly, out of habit, without a thought as to Whom it is who comes into our very beings is not to receive Jesus with love, reverence, adoration, gratitude and prayerfulness. When we receive Holy Communion, do we encounter Our Lord? Are our hearts open to the Divine Presence within us? Do we receive the full outpouring of grace and mercy, which Jesus Eucharistic desires to give us?

## October 8, 2023

Today's Gospel is the parable of the wicked tenants whose forgetfulness foreshadows tragic consequences for them. (Matthew 21:33-43) We should ask ourselves if our own failure to remember the gifts, which await us at each Mass, also foreshadows sad consequences for us. St. Jean Vianney the Cure of Ars gives us some insights into the importance of the Holy Eucharist. He exhorts us to remember, "The Holy Eucharist is a greater gift than the Creation of the Universe."

**Reflection:** As we approach our reception of Holy Communion this week, never forget that as Catholic Christians we are sublimely privileged to receive the Living God under the appearance of a small, fragile, consecrated, white HOST. Jesus comes to us in His Divine Humility. How do we receive Him in return?

## October 1, 2023

We celebrate the Feast of the Guardian Angels this week on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. We know that when we attend Mass that there are also myriads of angels in attendance, including our own guardian angels. What is the first thing about the angels that we should imitate? St. Jean Vianney tells us that it is "their consciousness of God." They are constantly aware of being in the Presence of God. We should ask our guardian angel to help us to approach Holy Communion recollectedly, knowing that we are about to receive God, whose greatness, glory, and majesty are unfathomable to our human minds.

**Reflection:** "We ought to ask the Blessed Virgin, the angels, and the saints to pray for us that we may receive God (in Holy Communion) as worthily as it is possible to receive Him." St. Jean Vianney

## September 24, 2023

It's never too late! This is the lesson which Our Lord wishes to teach us in today's Gospel. (Matthew 20:1-16) If you have been away from the Church or have been less fervent in practicing your Faith, this Gospel message of coming late to Faith and love of God and neighbor is a welcoming invitation. Come and find what you have always been searching for in life. It is an invitation from Our Lord to come back to Love.

**Reflection:** "If you really want to grow in love, come back to the Eucharist". St. Teresa of Calcutta

## September 17, 2023

When we pray the “Our Father” before receiving the Eucharist, should we pause on the words, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”? Today’s Gospel is from Mathew 18: 21-35 and it focuses our attention on forgiving our brothers from our hearts. Jesus is teaching us that as God the Father forgives us, so too must we forgive our fellow human beings. This is not always an easy task. Yet, it is required of us. St. Jean Vianney the saint of the confessional wrote, “Sin is the assassin of the soul.” Unforgiveness is the sin that will gnaw on us and slowly destroy us from within.

**Reflection:** The main requirement for the worthy reception of Holy Communion is that we receive Holy Communion in the state of grace. When we are in serious sin, we need the sacrament of Reconciliation before approaching Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. (CCC 1385) We know that in the sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives us and pours out a flood of His tender mercy upon us. St. Jean Vianney also wrote, “The Lord is more anxious to forgive our sins than a woman is to carry her baby out of a burning building.”

## September 10, 2023

This coming week on Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate the Feast of the Exultation of the Holy Cross. Take the time to look today at the Cross above our altar. The vertical beam represents our hearts and souls being firmly planted and rooted Heavenward in our love for God. The horizontal beam symbolizes our arms reaching out in loving service to our neighbors.

**Reflection:** The Holy Eucharist enables us to achieve both union with God and with our neighbor. It is the surest, simplest and sweetest pathway to joy.

## September 3, 2023

Jesus admonishes us in today’s Gospel with these words, “You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do.” (John 16:21-27) When we consider the gift of the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, do we see only with our human eyes a small, fragile piece of unleavened bread? Instead, we need to look beyond through the eyes of living Faith to see the priceless gift of Jesus Himself, who is present to us in the Blessed Sacrament.

**Reflection:** As you approach the reception of Holy Communion today, ask the Holy Spirit to open your mind to God’s reality: that the Host you are about to receive is the glorious, resurrected, LIVING Body of Our Lord and Savior.

## August 27, 2023

In today’s Gospel, Our Lord asks the Apostles, “Who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:13-20) This is a pertinent question for each one of us to ponder. When we look at the Sacred Host, we should see the ineffable depths of love with which we are loved by Jesus. We can truly say, “My Lord, my God and my All”.

St. John Paul II wrote, “The Eucharistic Banquet is truly a ‘sacred’ banquet, in which the simplicity of the signs conceals the unfathomable holiness of God.” (48 Ecclesia de Eucharistia)

**Reflection:** How aware are we that we can consume the LIVING GOD in the consecrated Host? Each reception of Holy Communion can increase our union with Jesus depending upon our personal disposition. Our glory in Heaven for eternity is increased by the love and purity with which we receive each Holy Communion.

## August 20, 2023

“There is no greater gift than God’s gift of Himself to us in Holy Communion. And there is nothing more rewarding than taking advantage of that intimacy by uniting in fervent reflection and prayer with Him during the precious time immediately upon receiving His Body and Blood.”

TheVeilRemoved.com

**Reflection:** “If we but paused for a moment to consider attentively what takes place in this Sacrament of the Eucharist, I’m sure that the thought of Christ’s love for us would transform the coldness of our hearts into a fire of love and gratitude.” St Teresa of Avila

## August 13, 2023

"Why do you doubt?" These are words of Jesus to St. Peter taken from today's Gospel. (Matthew 14:22-33) These are words that Our Lord could easily pose to us regarding His Divine Presence in the Holy Eucharist. Do you doubt that you are receiving the LIVING Person of Jesus, when you receive Holy Communion. Do you receive Him with an open heart?

**Reflection:** Our Lady revealed the following to Vicka, one of the visionaries in Medjugorje: After you receive Holy Communion, kneel down. Do not look around at anyone. Speak with Jesus who is in your heart for AT LEAST 10 minutes. During this time Beauty, Love, Peace, Mercy, Joy become yours. This allows Jesus to transform us into Himself. If we have pure hearts and are in the state of grace, He will give all of Himself to us and pour out into our souls the treasures of His Heart.

## August 6, 2023

Today we celebrate the Transfiguration of Jesus, where Our Lord gives a glimpse of His glory to Peter, James and John. The three are astounded at what they see. They are privileged to see beyond Christ's humanity in order to be strengthened in their Faith. St. Ambrose writes, "Do not then believe only what the eyes of your body tell you."

**Reflection:** When you approach Holy Communion, look beyond the consecrated Host, which appears to be but a fragile piece of bread. In the Holy Eucharist is contained the entire glorious body, blood, soul and divinity of the living Christ. St. Ambrose continues, "What is not comprehended by the eyes but is seen by the mind and the soul is seen in a truer and deeper sense." It is with the eyes of Faith that we can clearly see Jesus in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

## July 30, 2023

"Where your treasure is, there is your heart." Matthew's Gospel today 13:44-52 speaks of the two parables: the treasure hidden in the field and the pearl of great price. We know that the treasure in both cases is the treasure of Heaven. Bishop Robert Barron tells us, "The Mass is a link to Heaven."

**Reflection:** If you have never seen the short film on the internet, "The Veil Removed", this might be a good time to spend a few "summer vacation" minutes watching it. [www.theveilremoved.com](http://www.theveilremoved.com)  
See what really happens at every Mass. Take a peek behind the earthly veil and see the spiritual reality of what happens at every Mass you attend.

## July 23, 2023

Matthew 13:24-43 is tough. It is today's gospel, and it speaks of evil and the "fiery furnace" of hell. We need to remind ourselves that serious sin has serious consequences. Our Lord in His Divine Mercy gave us the Sacrament of Reconciliation. It is a good time to remember that if we find ourselves in mortal sin, if we have broken our relationship with God, we need the forgiveness and healing of confession in order to receive Holy Communion worthily.

**Reflection:** Nothing brings us more peace of heart, mind and soul than to be back in relationship with the Blessed Trinity. Know the joy of resting in the loving arms of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

## July 16, 2023

Today's Gospel is about bearing fruit for the Kingdom of God. We, the lay people, have the job of being the good seed which brings the Word of God into the world in whatever capacity that we find ourselves. God is an equal opportunity employer. We are all called to become the image of God in the world.

St. Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein, a Jewish Convert, Philosophy professor, Carmelite Nun and martyr of Auschwitz) wrote, "In order to be an image of God, the spirit must turn to what is eternal, hold it in spirit, keep it in memory, and by loving it, embrace it in the will."

**Reflection:** It is the graces that we receive in Holy Communion which enables us to go out and to bring Christ into the world. During these trying times, we need these graces more than ever. As Flannery O'Connor wrote in her book, "The Habit of Being", "You have to push as hard as the age that pushes against you." Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament strengthens us to do this.

## July 9, 2023

In today's gospel (Matthew 11: 25-30), Jesus addresses His Heavenly Father. He shares with us that God reveals to the childlike what is hidden from the wise and the intelligent.

In order to believe in the true Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, we too must be like infants in humility and in simplicity. We must trust that what God says IS. God reveals Himself to those with childlike Faith. He blesses them with a firm belief in the true Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

**Reflection:** St. Thomas Moore wrote, "Finally it's not a matter of reason. Finally it's a matter of love."

## July 2, 2023

Listen to the words of Jesus to St. Faustina. "Oh, how painful it is to Me that souls so seldom unite themselves to Me in Holy Communion. I wait for souls, and they are indifferent toward me. I love them tenderly and sincerely, and they distrust Me. I want to lavish my graces on them, and they do not want to accept them." (The Diary of St. Maria Faustina Kowalska – "Divine Mercy in My soul" pp1447)

**Reflection:** Is Our Lord directly speaking to us here? Is He pleading with us to recognize what He is offering to us each time we receive His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist? Are we among those souls for whom He waits and longs for? The Church dedicates the month of July to the Precious Blood. When we receive the Body of Christ in Holy Communion, we also receive His Most Precious Blood. This month offers us a special opportunity to become more acutely aware of the gift of Christ's Precious Blood in the Eucharist. It is the month to become more aware of what we uniquely possess as Catholics.

## June 25, 2023

These sobering words are taken from today's Gospel, "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell."

(Matthew 10:28)

**Reflection:** Are you planning for your future? Do you have savings for your children's college fund? Do you have a financial planner for your retirement? These are all prudent necessities.

According to the Gospel message today, Our Lord is also asking us to be prudent for our eternal future. So how is your spiritual bank account? Do you thank God for your blessings? Love your neighbor as yourself? Do you pass a Church and stop to visit Jesus in the tabernacle? How are your Beatitude deposits coming along? Do you pray daily? Say the rosary? Go to confession? Attend Mass as a #1 priority? ("Every Mass that we attend enriches the Divine Life within us." Father Joseph Wolfe, EWTN )

Our earthly future is limited in time, but OUR ETERNAL FUTURE remains FOREVER.

## June 18, 2023

"You are dearer to me than all other people." (Exodus 32)

**Reflection:** Have you ever wondered why, when you enter a Catholic Church, that there is an innate sense that there is someone present there? That the church is not empty? This reflects the fact that there is a tabernacle in every Catholic Church and within that tabernacle, reposes the Blessed Sacrament, the LIVING Heart of our Catholic Faith. The Holy Eucharist would not be possible without the priesthood. No priests....no Eucharist! After you receive Our Lord in Holy Communion today, why not ask Him to bless us with many holy vocations.

## June 11, 2023

"THE HOLY EUCHARIST IS A LIVING PERSON." Bishop Robert Barron

**Reflection:** In "The Diary of Saint Faustina", the saint records these words of Our Lord, referring to the Blessed Sacrament Jesus tells her, "People treat me like a dead object." We need to ask, when we receive Holy Communion, are we aware that we are in the presence of the truly, living, loving Person of Jesus? Do we interiorly respond accordingly to Our Lord's presence within us? Living Faith touches the Heart of Jesus. How alive is your Faith in the Holy Eucharist on this great Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ?

## June 4, 2023

Today is the Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. We celebrate the Three Divine Persons in One God: God the Father, our Creator; God the Son, Jesus, our Redeemer and God the Holy Spirit, our Sanctifier. The LOVE which exists between the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit. Because it is the nature of love to seek union, and this Triune Love is a perfect, divine love, the three Divine Persons are One. Recall that St. Patrick used a shamrock as a symbol of this teaching.

**Reflection:** When you receive Holy Communion today, reflect upon the truth that the Blessed Trinity, the Living, Triune God is dwelling within you. Recall the words of Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen, "The highest unity in the Divine Order is the unity of the soul and Christ in Communion." It's all about LOVE.

## May 28, 2023

Today is the great Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came down upon the Apostles and Mary in the form of wind and tongues of fire. (Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11)

One of the most beautiful passages referring to the Holy Spirit's indwelling in the soul was written by St. Magdalene de Pazzi, a 16<sup>th</sup> c Carmelite mystic. If you've ever had difficulty relating to the Holy Spirit, her insights should open your mind, heart and soul to His treasures of grace. (The full passage can be found in the Liturgy of the Hours on her feast day, May 25<sup>th</sup>.)

She begins by linking the coming of the Holy Spirit to Jesus' Precious Blood in the Holy Eucharist. "You, the Word, are most wonderful, working through the Holy Spirit to fill the soul with yourself, so that it is joined to God, grasps God, tastes God and absorbs nothing but God. The Holy Spirit comes into the soul signed with the precious blood of the word and of the slain Lamb ... Just as two rushing rivers intermingle..., so the divine Spirit acts upon the soul and absorbs it. .... It flows into the soul so sweetly and imperceptibly that few esteem its greatness... Spirit of truth, you are the reward of the saints, comforter of souls, light in the darkness, riches to the poor, treasure to lovers, food for the hungry, comfort to those who are wandering; to sum up, you are the one in whom all treasures are contained."

**Reflection:** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle in them the fire of your love. Please take some time to prayerfully read and reflect upon the Pentecost SEQUENCE in today's Mass.

## May 21, 2023

In today's gospel Jesus speaks of the glory of the Father who has glorified the Son. He also speaks of the glory, in which Jesus promises that we, as His followers, will also share. (John 17: 1-11a)

**Reflection:** How is Christ glorified in us? When we are united to Christ through the outpouring of grace, which is given to us especially in the sacraments, we become sharers in the life of Jesus. One of the main purposes of receiving the Holy Eucharist is to become more Christ-like. If we are open in humility to the graces of this Sacrament, we should become more loving, more charitable, more selfless, more generous. One of the truths of the spiritual life is that if you are not growing in holiness, you are regressing. The ultimate objective of the sacraments is to make us saints.

## May 14, 2023

“And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him. (14:21)

**Reflection:** Think of this promise the next time you receive Holy Communion and are imbued with the intimate love, grace and mercy of Christ. Through the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist, we are enabled to have a vision of whom Jesus truly is. This is not a textbook definition of Our Savior, but the reality of Divine Love being totally poured out and present to you in a personal manner. Ask the Holy Spirit to make you aware of this revelation, which Jesus has promised us. “Thanks be to you, my joy, my confidence, my God....and I myself shall be with you, for from you is my being.” (St. Augustine, “The Confessions”)

## May 7, 2023

“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me.... Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?” These are Our Lord’s words taken today from the Gospel of John 14:1-12. It is good to recall that wherever Jesus is truly present to us in the Blessed Sacrament, both God the Father and the Holy Spirit are also present. It is through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit during the words of Consecration that the priest enables the miracle of the bread and wine to become the living Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Christ.

**Reflection:** St. Hilary of Poitiers wrote that, “Christ is in the Father by the divine nature, we are in him by his corporeal birth, and he again is in us by the mystery of the Blessed Sacrament.” When we receive Our Lord in Holy Communion, we also have access to union with all the Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Not only is Jesus in the Father and the Father is in Jesus, but we too share in that same intimacy. In addition, the Holy Spirit pours out the life of grace beautifying our souls. Don’t waste the graces available to you at such a precious time. Be mindful of this Gift of gifts.

## April 30, 2023

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday. The Gospel is from John 10:1-10. It is Jesus calling us to follow Him as faithful disciples. The sheep in the parable recognize the shepherd’s voice. When we recognize Jesus and follow Our Lord, He makes us a trustworthy promise. “I came so that they (we) might have life and have it more abundantly.”

**Reflection:** Our God is never stingy. He never gives us the abundant life of grace in dribs and drabs. Being generous Love, God pours out Himself to us especially when we receive Him in the Holy Eucharist. The only thing which hampers our reception of this abundance is our own disposition. We receive the amount of grace in every Holy Communion that we are disposed to receive.

## April 23, 2023

Today’s Gospel is the wonderful account of the two disciples who meet Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Initially they do not recognize Our Lord. Yet as He related the passages of Scripture, which referred to Himself, their hearts burned within them. They urged Him to “Stay with us.” Afterwards they immediately recognized Him in “the breaking of the bread’.(Luke 24: 13-35)

**Reflection:** Where do we today find Jesus staying with us? He stays with us as the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. He stays with us after we receive Him in Holy Communion. Do our hearts burn within us, when we receive Him? Or like the disciples in today’s gospel, do we not recognize Jesus. Oh! How foolish are we? Please take some time to reflect on your time spent in thanksgiving after Holy Communion. Recognize Whom you have just received. Recognize that you have the Savior of the World, the LIVING GOD within you.

## April 16, 2023

Thomas doubts the resurrection of Jesus in our Gospel today. (John 20:19-31) But Jesus gently invites Thomas to see His wounded hands and to place his hand into the sword wound in His side. The wound in Christ's side confirmed that He had already died. When pierced by the soldier's lance, blood and water gushed forth from Christ's side.

In the Divine Mercy image of Jesus, which He revealed to St. Faustina, we can see streams of red and white light emanating from His side. (Google it.) The red is His Precious Blood in the Holy Eucharist. The white is the cleansing water of Baptism. Both give us Divine Life. Baptism makes us a beloved child of God. The Precious Blood washes us of our sins and nourishes us as we journey to Heaven.

**Reflection:** Like Thomas, do you doubt the true Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament? Do you doubt the great outpouring of Divine Mercy available to us in the Holy Eucharist at every Mass? Jesus gently invites us to union with Himself with each Holy Communion. He tenderly places us into His pierced Heart and pours out an abundance of grace and mercy upon us.

## April 9, 2023 (Easter Sunday)

Allelulia! He is risen! This is the great triumph of Our Lord Jesus over death. His glorious resurrection is our hope for eternal life. Christ's glorified body prefigures our own. In the words of St. Bridget of Sweden, "What is it, Lord, that You could have done for us that You haven't done?"

**Reflection:** In the worthy reception of Holy Communion, we share as the Mass says in "the foretaste and the promise of the Pascal Feast of Heaven." The word Eucharist means "THANKSGIVING". We can never begin to thank Jesus enough for so great a gift. It will take all eternity just to begin. Happy Easter!

## April 2, 2023 (Palm Sunday)

As we enter Holy Week, we recall that it was during the Lord's Last Supper that Jesus gave us both the Holy Eucharist and the Priesthood. We cannot have one without the other. If we have no priests, we won't have the Holy Eucharist.

**Reflection:** Father James Brent, O.P. who is a priest obviously devoted to the Eucharist wrote, "Though our weeks might be busy and our schedules might be full, the real reason to live is on Sunday. The real reason to live is the Eucharist. There is nothing greater on Earth than the Eucharist. There is no greater Love in our midst."

Let us celebrate Holy Week, which are our Catholic "High Holy Days". If you have never done so, try to participate in the services offered this week in preparation for our great Feast of Easter.