



"Christ's presence in the Eucharist heals wounds and transforms bitter negativity into the joy of the Lord..." (Pope Francis)



Volume 5 Of The Mass

The Our Father, The Sign of Peace
The Lamb of God
The Reception of Holy Communion
The Sending Forth and Blessing Rite
By
Theresa Zlotkowski

Dear Friends,

“The Resurrection of the Lord renews the whole world.” In this final volume on the Mass we celebrate the power of the resurrection expressed through the Our Father, the Sign of Peace and Lamb of God, the Reception of Holy Communion, and Sending Forth Rites which include beautiful Blessing Prayers. Throughout the Mass we are keenly aware of Christ’s Paschal Mystery. Now we especially celebrate the gift of new life that is ours as we call God, our “Abba.” Vatican II called us to be aware of the gift of peace shared in every Mass. This gift binds us to one another and invites us to prepare for true “communion” with one another. We are so aware of the need for peace in our own anxiety filled hearts and in places like Palestine, Gaza, Israel, Iran, Africa, Latin America, Pakistan, India, Ukraine, Russia and the list goes on.

Our resurrection story reaches a high point as we invite, Jesus, into all of who we are in Holy Communion. The risen Savior comes to dwell within our life. What greater gift of resurrection can we receive. As soon as we receive Him we are commissioned to “go forth” to share Jesus in our world.

May you be filled with the joy of resurrection as you pray this final volume on the Mass. Fr. Pedro Arrupe said, “Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is than falling in love with God in a quite absolute, final way.” I hope these booklets on the Mass have helped you to fall ever more deeply in love with God in the Mass and daily life. I leave you with the beautiful words of our late Pope Francis: “When you are down, take up the Word of God and go to Sunday Mass and receive Communion, to participate in the mystery of Jesus. The Word of God, the Eucharist: they fill us with joy.”

Theresa Zlotkowski



June 1, 2025 - Sunday

“Our Father”

Dear Jesus,

This is the most intimate prayer You taught us to pray. You invited us to call God “Father.” In Your tradition that was equal to calling God “Abba.” You wanted us to know that truly we were sons and daughters and God was filled with profound closeness and unconditional love, affection and tenderness for us. St. Francis de Sales often spoke of “the divine embrace” of God. St. Hildegard of Bingen is said to have written: “God hugs you. You are encircled by the arms of the mystery of God.” God is our parent whose heart is always open for us to come in and rest.

God is not just mine. He is “our.” So we are all related to one another. We are all in communion with one another in the family of God. Our actions are never private affairs. Who I choose to be and what I choose to do affect everyone else in the Body of Christ. The term “our” challenges us to an acceptance of each other with our many differences. We are invited to go beyond differences to the heart of one another. We lift each other’s burdens and are transformed by the love of each other.

“Yet in fact God is not far from any of us,
Since it is in Him that we live, and move, and exist...
We are all His children.”
Acts 17:27-28

Tender God...Father...Abba,
Into your embrace I run-
To fall into your arms is my salvation.
I know Your arms surrounding me –
In my human frailty,
In all that cries and groans in me for love.

To fall into the hands of the living God-
 Frightens me...what will you do with me?
 Comforts me...will you heal my fear?
You speak a word that echoes life in the deep abyss of my heart

—
 Your word is a living Word —
 That sustains me.
 Transforms me.
 Lifts me to unimaginable heights.

Whisper Your Word in me.
 Shout Your Word in me.
 Become Your Word in me.

Father God,
 You are my home-
My soul wonders about, searching for Your security,
 But You pursue me —
 Come home, my daughter...
 Come home, my son...

 Your love cradles my worry.
 Your Grace penetrates my depth.
Your gentleness now transforms and transfigures all worry,
 Creatively molding worry into strength.
God of outstretched arms,
 I am Yours,
 In Your peace I dwell.
 In Your joy I delight.
In You...In my brothers and sisters...I am made whole.



June 2, 2025 - Monday

“Thy Kingdom Come”

Dear Jesus,

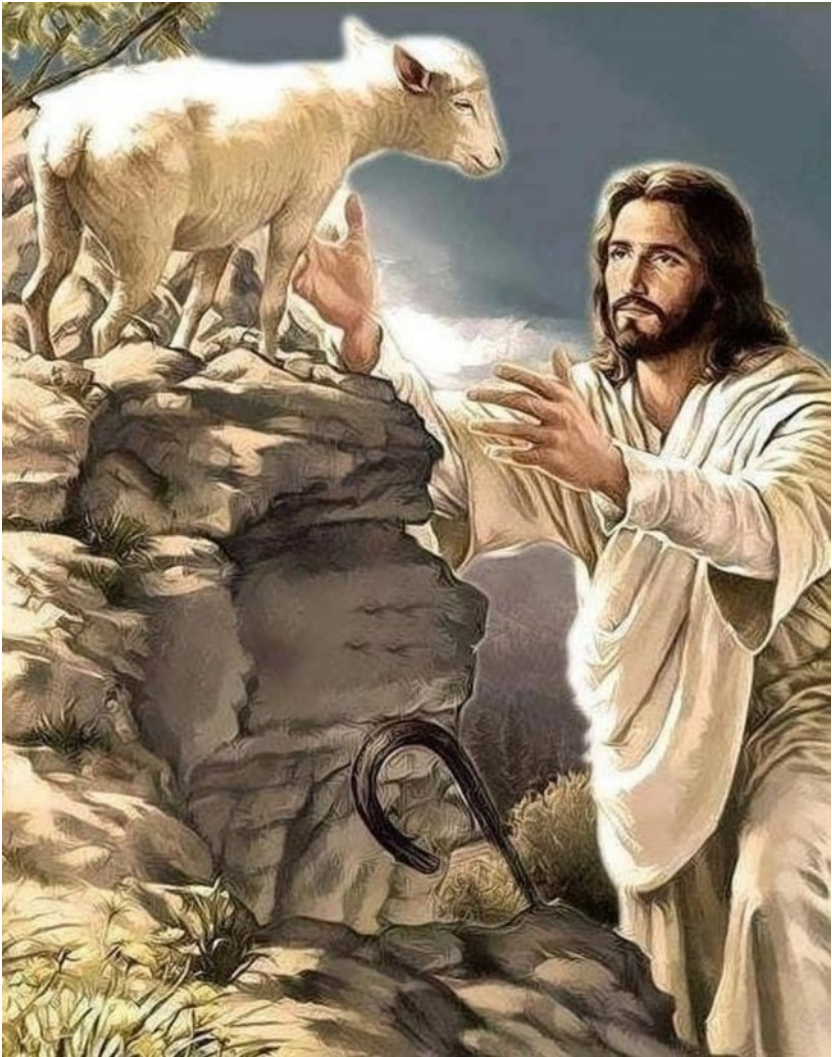
I remember learning that Your kingdom is a reality whenever “the lame walk, the blind see, the deaf hear, the dead are raised and the poor have the good news preached to them.” (Mathew 11:5-7) So what does this mean? God is in our midst when those who are hurting are comforted; when some one who didn’t see a way out has come to have a new vision of what they can do; when someone who thought they had little worth could not hear their inner voice tell them they are indeed filled up with the life-giving presence of God; when someone whose heart was broken has discovered they are loved in a new and more powerful way and have a gift to offer that comes directly from their weakness. These are the powerful transformations that can happen within us. They are the presence of Your kingdom alive in our hearts, Jesus.

Jesus Your kingdom comes when the beatitudes are lived out. (Mathew 5:1-12) Your kingdom is a reality when we know our complete dependance on You. Your kingdom comes when in our tears we discover Your love that has always been there for us. Your kingdom comes when we know the deep longing in our hearts for what is right and true, what is beautiful and just, what is honest and what is filled with integrity. Your kingdom is in our midst when our hearts are filled with mercy and forgiveness, unconditional love and belief in the goodness of the other. Your kingdom comes when we are willing to work for peace in our own hearts and in the world around us so that all people might know the gentle, loving peace of God.

Jesus, Your Kingdom come is Your dream for us. May we be forever aligned with this vision that You have for our world.

May we be

given the ability to work diligently to make room so that Our dreams come true for all humanity.



June 3, 2025 - Tuesday

“Give us this day our daily bread”

Dear Jesus,

The statistics are real:

2.33 billion people experience moderate food insecurity in our world. 900 million people face severe food insecurity. Over 3.1 billion people can not afford a healthy diet. 9.9 million children live in poverty. Now we proclaim to be the richest country in the world. What is wrong? What prevents our hearts from reaching out to care for the poor among us? What blinds us from seeing the needs of our brothers and sisters? When we pray in the “Our Father” for our daily bread we are praying that we will be moved out of our lethargy to act to create a different world where our brothers and sisters’ needs can be met. Those needs are not met unless we are shaken up, startled to care, awakened to reach out to physically lift up those in need who live next door to us as well as across the globe. As long as people continue to suffer from hunger, low incomes, homelessness, unemployment, under employment You Jesus continue to suffer. In every Mass the needs of the world around us must be brought to the altar for You to touch and transform. However these needs must also be put next to the hearts of the body of Christ for members of the body of Christ must take up these needs with the strength of Eucharist. With that strength it is possible for us all to share and receive our daily bread.



June 4, 2025 - Wednesday

“Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

Dear Jesus,

I now know that God pursues us in our waywardness. God runs after us, begging us to come home to His heart. Once home, God doesn't ask questions but simply gets out a beautiful, soft robe and wraps us in love. Then to our surprise holds a party to welcome us back. It is an incredible gesture that we can not fathom. It is what we call mercy.

God sees beyond our sin to our goodness. God calls forth the beauty and gift of our self-worth. In the midst of our sin, God sees and believes in the good we can do. The light shines brighter than the darkness in us. God does not shame us but reaffirms the Light in us – God's Light – the Baptismal Light.

Those of us who pride ourselves on being good and righteous don't know how to handle God treating others in such a manner. At times we want to cry, “It is not fair. They don't deserve this.” God reaches out to embrace us too. The fact of the matter is – it isn't reasonable – it's the sacred, mysterious compassion and love of God displayed in unimaginable ways.

How do I respond to such love? This is an important question. Perhaps if I really began to believe in it I would begin to see myself in [new ways. Our worth and goodness is more powerful than our sin. God longs to release this goodness in us. To be loved in the midst of brokenness is incredible – it changes our hearts if we really ponder](#) this love and accept it. Accepting God's love for us – letting God love us – in fact “enjoying God loving us” is often harder than giving love to God. Yet, this acceptance of God's love is really the best love we can give back to God.

“Forgive us our trespasses” is about us believing in God’s mercy and unconditional love. Without being in touch with how fond God is of us despite our failures we lack the ability to really forgive others. We are to forgive as God forgives. We can do that only because we have first experienced the incredible forgiveness of God.

“Forgive us our trespasses” invites us to surrender to God our sin. That too is a powerful act. We have a hard time accepting our limitations. But the truth is that no matter how perfect and righteous we think we are we are the prodigal son or daughter who has sinned. Something amazing happens in our hearts when we can face into our inadequacy – our sin – and recognize our need for God’s touch.



Father Henri Nouwen states that the authority of God is the authority of compassion: “That authority comes from letting the sins of his children pierce his heart. There is no lust, greed, anger, resentment, jealousy, vengeance in his lost children that has not caused immense grief to his heart. The grief is so deep because the heart is so pure. From the deep inner place where love embraces all human grief, the Father reaches out to his children. The touch of His hands, radiating inner light, seeks only to heal.” God’s only desire is to bless us.

God come wrap Your arms around me.
I long for your gentle hands to touch me –
I put into your large hands my perfectionism-
My belief that I am God – that I am in control.
I place in Your tender hands,
My complaining, my negativism,

The darkness in me that refuses
To believe that I or others can be different.
I place in Your compassionate hands –
My jealousy, bitterness and need to be right.
I place in Your gentle hands –
My judgementalism and interpretations of others.
I place in Your creative hands –
My inertia and apathy, my ego-centeredness.
I place in Your soothing hands
The darkness of unthoughtful reactions that wound and hurt
others.
I place in Your affirming hands –
My failures to act justly...tenderly...to walk humbly with You.
I trust that my very limitations hold a gift to be given.
You see in me what I cannot see in myself..
I receive the tear You cry for me..
I hear You whisper in my heart, "You are loved."



June 5, 2025 – Thursday

**“Deliver us Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days.”**

Dear Jesus

I am thinking about a person whom I admire very much in our faith. His work and ministry keep coming to mind as a person who truly brought “peace in our day.”

There are many things that stand out in Cardinal Bernadin’s life. He was Archbishop of one of the largest diocese in the United States. When he came to the archdiocese of Chicago he requested that his priests – rather than perceive him as a great prelate – first call him “Joseph,” their brother. He taught others how to welcome death as a friend and in his last years he chose to spend a great deal of time ministering to cancer patients. When asked who the greatest person in the city of Chicago was he pointed out a welfare mother with four children who kept trying to live with dignity despite the difficulties of life. As bishop, he came to realize how his work had become more important than spending quality time with God in prayer and so he recommitted himself to giving God the first hour of his day. Cardinal Bernadin identified with all who struggle to let go into God’s care. He writes, “I have prayed and struggled constantly to be able to let go of things more willingly, to be free of everything that keeps the Lord from finding greater hospitality in my soul or interferes with my surrender of what God asks of me.”

Among the great characteristics of this Church leader is his ability to forgive. In November 1993 Cardinal Bernadin was falsely accused of sexual misconduct. Faced with such accusations he felt enormous humiliation, anger and bewilderment. A year after the charges were dropped Cardinal Bernadin went to visit the young man who admitted he was lying and was now dying of aids.

The Cardinal wanted to pray with him for both his spiritual and physical well being. During the course of the conversation the young man was also able to seek forgiveness of Cardinal Bernadin. Cardinal Bernadin asked if he could celebrate Mass with Steven who was his accuser. Steven hesitated. Bernadin did not want to push it. But he said, "I have brought you a Bible I have inscribed to you." Steven revealed how in anger he had thrown bibles against the walls in hotel rooms but he took the Bible and immediately held it to his heart while tears welled up from within. Then the Cardinal took from his brief case a hundred year old chalice. He told Steven that it was a gift from a man who wanted Cardinal Bernadin to use it to say Mass for Steven. Steven immediately said yes he wanted Cardinal Bernadin to say Mass right now.

Cardinal Bernadin later wrote, "Never in my entire priesthood have I witnessed a more profound reconciliation." He believed that no words could describe the power of God's grace present that afternoon.

Before Cardinal Bernadin left Steven that afternoon Steven said, "A big burden has been lifted from me today. I feel healed and very much at peace.

Soon after, Steven died at his mother's home fully reconciled with the Church. Steven told his mother that this was his gift to her. The priest in Cincinnati who attended him told Cardinal Bernadin this.

Jesus we give You thanks for "granting peace in our days." in surprising, uplifting and magnificent ways.

(Resource: *The Gift of Peace; Personal Reflections by Joseph Archbishop Cardinal Bernadin; Loyola Press, Chicago, Illinois; 1997*)

June 6, 2025 - Friday

“that by the help of Your mercy we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress.”

Dear Jesus,

In every Mass, Your presence makes present Your powerful mercy. Through this great gift of merciful, unconditional love we experience the forgiveness of our sin and the assurance that distress need not separate us from Your presence.

I remember an incident that occurred a number of years ago. Just as Eucharist was to begin I met David. David was a first grader whose eyes were filled with tears and sadness. I asked David what was wrong. He could not speak. David continued to cry and cry. I asked him where his parents were and all he did was cry. What was I to do with David? I took David by the hand and invited David to sit with me right in the front pew at Mass. His tears subsided. His face lit up. David sat with me during the entire Mass. David could not speak the pain in his heart nor was he looking for someone to really speak the right words to him. David seemed to need the simple but transforming gift of presence – the sacred gift of presence we give to another that accepts the other just as they are. I believe that David received that gift of Your presence Jesus, at this Mass, and that presence received from Your sacred mysteries celebrated at Mass relieved him from his distress.

I think of St. Antony developing the ability to free people from all distress. He is a Desert Father of the early Church who lived in the 200's who sought a deeper intimacy with God. He went off to live by himself in the desert and there faced the demons inside of himself. He wrestled with all the feelings, motives, attitudes, losses, griefs within. As he faced into himself, he also discovered the presence of You Jesus there in his own heart!

Though, he spent a great deal of time alone, he continued to seek out the wisdom of soul friends who would help to guide him.

After a period of time Antony returned to the city. To his amazement soon leaders in government, men and women from all states in life, those wrestling with major decisions and problems sought out the wisdom and insight of Antony. Antony extended to them comfort, healing, insight and the presence of You Jesus that he had discovered.

People spoke of a great light emanating from his very person. Warmth, trust and gentle love emanated from him. This was Your Light Jesus that “freed them from sin and helped make them safe from all distress.” People flocked to enter into this Light that Antony created a safe haven for people to find hope.

Thank-you Jesus that in every Mass Your real presence also “frees us from sin and makes us safe from all distress.”



June 7, 2025 - Saturday

The priest turns towards the people and says: “The peace of the Lord be with you always.” The people reply: “And with your spirit.” The deacon or priest says, “Let us offer each other a sign of peace.”

Dear Jesus,

This peace we offer each other is a sign of our communion and unity with each other. In the early Church, Saints Peter and Paul said: “Greet one another with a holy kiss.” This beautiful gesture celebrates the charity, generosity, love we have for one another. Eucharist deepens this love.

May the peace of Jesus, lift us from all darkness and despair.

May the peace of Jesus, quiet our prayer that we might hear God’s voice.

May the peace of Jesus, take away the cry for help we feel deep within.

May the peace of Jesus, be the gift we offer another to bring joy to their heart.

May the peace of Jesus, be the light that brings a new possibility to a seemingly dark road ahead.

May the peace of Jesus, be the hand that walks with me bringing a blessed hope.

May the peace of Jesus, be the protection from war of all kinds.

May the peace of Jesus, be the power that casts aside all violence that destroys neighborhoods.

May the peace of Jesus, be the gentle gift I offer to another to bring a new tomorrow.

May the peace of Jesus, in this Mass, be the gift that sustains our journey as a community in faith.



June 8, 2025 – Sunday

“Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.”

Dear Jesus,

As we hear these words the host is broken. We engage in the breaking of the bread which is a rich action dating back to New Testament times when You Jesus took the bread, blessed the bread, broke the bread and shared the bread with Your friends. Throughout our liturgical gathering we engage in these important actions in which You become present to us in significant ways. Jesus, may my heart become ever more alert to Your real presence through actions of taking, blessing, breaking, and sharing You the Bread of Life.

Every time I lift up a person around me may I remember that I am “taking” You by the hand, by the heart, in care and love. Each time I give thanks for Your presence that comes to me through another’s presence, goodness and life I “bless” You because You are so near to me and alive with God’s presence. Each time I receive You in Holy Communion Your gift of self is broken open in me so that I might be strengthened to be Your presence that can be broken open for others. When I say “Amen” to Your presence Jesus I am sent to share You who are the “Bread of Life” with others.

Jesus the Scriptures refer to You as “the Lamb.” In being a lamb You show us gentleness, innocence and You become the perfect sacrifice offered to God to take away our sin. John’s Gospel portrays You as the “Servant-Lamb” that was led to die for us so that we could be freed from sin, heaven’s doors could be opened and mercy could be poured into our hearts in abundance.

Jesus in every Mass, at this time, our hearts sing in jubilation
because Your mercy flows like a river upon us You people.

Mercy before us to open our hearts to see You Jesus.

Mercy under us to strengthen us to stand firm to act in Your
name.

Mercy beside us Jesus to take us by the hand when we fear
falling.

Mercy above us to be our light when darkness comes.

Mercy around us Jesus to help us reach for each other in
kindness.

Mercy in the heart so tenderness and compassion can live there.

Mercy Jesus in our soul so You can find a home in us.



June 9, 2025 – Monday

“Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”

Dear Jesus,

This invitation to Eucharist is an invitation to a Marriage supper! Jesus, You are the Bridegroom and we are the bride – the Church whom Jesus You come to wed. We are engaged in something very powerful and awesome! Do we really understand the magnitude of this event?

Certainly at a wedding we would walk with dignity and care forward to receive our beloved Bridegroom. There would be anticipation, excitement, awe, wonder, delight, joy, reverence. We would stand with attention ever alert to whatever is to happen. We would open ourselves with gentleness and love to receive our bridegroom.

We would move to our seat, not with haste but with thoughtfulness as to who we have received. In no way would we want to move quickly or go home to do chores or attend to the regular activities! No! We have received our bridegroom who is You, Jesus. We should want to rest with You Jesus for awhile. We should want to hold You in our heart. We should want to reflect upon Your beauty and goodness. We should want to reflect upon how You have chosen to come to make Your home with us. We should want to give You our love.

St. Ignatius Loyola wrote a beautiful prayer that comes to mind and heart:

“Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding,
And my entire will, all I have and call my own.
You have given all to me.
To you, Lord, I return it.”

Now Jesus, as You dear bridegroom dwelling in my heart, I want
You to know:

I am honored that You would make Your home with me,
My heart cries with joy that You would choose to stay with me,
I keep trying to expand my heart to embrace Your wondrous
love.

You have expanded it for me.

I feel You call to me with such profound gentleness,
To hear You say my name lifts me and stirs tenderness inside of
me.

I believe it is holy when You call my name, it feels so intimate
and gentle. To know that You know my name gives me trust.
Your trust in me fills my heart to overwhelming. This trust saves
me.

I feel You wrap my whole being in a blanket of belief in me –
You see things in me, that I can't see in myself.

I want to sit with You and just be with You to discover what
these things are.

I feel You wrapping me again and again in joy.

Jesus You bring to me the gift of gentle joy –

A new joy in living,

A new joy in being,

A new joy in presence,

A new joy in gifts,

You gift me with gifts of the heart,

Heart gifts galore.

Jesus, my bridegroom, Your heart beats for me.

And my heart beats for You. I feel it. I know it.

After receiving Jesus in Holy Communion, this is my prayer. I
wish for You Jesus to take me. I wish to give You all that I am. I
wish to let You live through me in powerful, joyful, gracious
ways.

June 10, 2025 - Tuesday

“Lord I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.”

The following words were spoken by Pope Francis on the occasion of the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, June 14, 2020

“Christ’s presence in the Eucharist heals wounds and transforms bitter negativity into the joy of the Lord...The Eucharist brings us the Father’s faithful love, which heals our sense of being orphans. It gives us Jesus’ love which transformed a tomb from an end to a beginning, and in the same way can transform our lives. It fills our hearts with the consoling love of the Holy Spirit, who never leaves us alone and always heals our wounds.

Every time we receive Him, He reminds us that we are precious, that we are guests He has invited to His banquet, friends with whom He wants to dine. And not only because He is generous but because He is truly in love with us. He sees and loves the beauty and goodness that we are...Only love can heal fear at its root and free us from the self-centeredness that imprisons us. And that is what Jesus does. He comes as Bread broken in order to break open the shells of our selfishness. He gives Himself in order to teach us that only by opening our hearts can we be set free from our interior barriers, from the paralysis of the heart.”

Dear Jesus,

As I receive You in Holy Communion,

You come to heal my deep, deep wounds of fear,

You reach Your hand to me and invite me to take hold of Your tight grip that pulls me into Your heart.

Here I feel safety, warmth and love encircle me.

I rest in this love that is unconditional and steadfast.

I feel a coming home to You dear Jesus,
Encircled by Your house of faithfulness and healing light,
My wounds are touched by You.
You don't offer magic but You offer compassion,
Your compassion holds me in a holy embrace that tells me
I am sacred, I am holy, I am Your beloved.
Jesus, Healer, Come and anoint that place in me that festers with
pain.

This is an invitation to wholeness that is deep-
And filling me with Your presence which is-
Your Grace that is All in All.

Your Grace Jesus fills my whole being and makes me whole.
In Holy Communion I am filled with Your Presence Jesus,
Healing and sanctifying me,
Healing and anointing me with strength and courage,
Healing and surrounding me with glorious redemption.

Thank-you Jesus,
I continue to hold onto Your hand until I feel
carried by Your hand -
In all ways.



June 11, 2025 – Wednesday

“The Body of Christ.” Amen
“The Blood of Christ.” Amen.

Dear Jesus,

We come forward to receive You, not alone but as a body of believers, as a community of people. This is why it is so important that we act as one; we do the same action of standing and opening our hands to receive so that we contribute to the act of being in unity. We try not to do anything to stand apart. Jesus, we want to celebrate our community, our unity. It is a great honor to belong to this community of believers that we became part of in Baptism. This community sustains us and nourishes us on our journey. In this community we are blessed and we come to know You as the One who walks with us in the breaking of the Bread. We are the body of Christ. You dwell in this body!

Then when we approach the minister and see the host in front of us and hear the words: “The Body of Christ,” we answer with a full hearted “Amen.” We approach another minister and see the cup filled with wine and hear the words: “The Blood of Christ,” we answer with a full hearted “Amen.” Amen means: “Yes, I believe.” “Yes, let it be so.” We eat the bread which is You Jesus and we drink the wine which is You Jesus. St. Augustine said that in receiving Holy Communion we should: “Behold what you are. Become what you receive.” We receive You Jesus so that we might become You in the world around us. It is a great mystery and a great commission.

Each time we receive Eucharist we are transformed personally and communally. Your love comes to dwell within us making us new and different. We welcome this love, we embrace it. We invite this love to heal us and to remake us more completely into who You have created us to be – Your people formed and shaped, renewed by Your Grace to be given that others might

have life. Just as You gave Your life Jesus by daily walking with others, transforming their lives we are invited to do the same. We are asked to heal, to call others into Your service, to care for the poor, to help the blind see, the lame walk and the prisoner to be set free. There are unique and special events and circumstances that You place us in to let Your kingdom grow and become. Your Holy Eucharist sustains us for this work. Thank-you Jesus for the gift of Eucharist – for Your Bread of Life given for the Life of the world.

When I receive You Jesus, I receive You who are the one who emptied Yourself totally for me by dying on the cross. In Eucharist help me to grow into understanding in my mind and heart what this self-emptying means. Only by the power of Your grace at work in me will I come to be able to empty myself more and more as You did for me. I take You by the hand Jesus, in each Holy Communion and pray to be who You have called me to be, poured out as You were poured out.



"Taste and See the Goodness of the Lord."

June 12, 2025 - Thursday

The Announcements

Dear Jesus,

So often I feel irritated by all those announcements that seem like a sort of intrusion into the Mass here at the end. Why can't we just read about them in the bulletin? So many of them don't seem to pertain to me. Why bother with them?

Let me think deeper. It occurs to me that maybe they are important. Mass, Eucharist connects with day to day life. It makes no sense unless it is lived in the messiness of life. I guess the announcements are a way of telling me to get out of my little world and look at ways Eucharist is living. I have to move out of my own little nestled community and look at what it might be like to become the hands and feet, the eyes and ears and mouth of You Jesus in the world around me. If I am not to be involved in one of these announcements then how will I be involved?

I am beginning to understand that the announcements are vital. Without them I am tempted to stay locked in my own little world. Perhaps they ought to irritate me and urge me on to be involved.

Nudge me Jesus, I have become too static, too stuck,

I look outside my window on these cold, windy days,

Beautiful red and yellow and blue birds come to visit me.

They come and stay for a bit then fly away,

They stir some new energy in me,

Filled with beauty and life they ignite my soul with a sense of joy, Fluttering about they share a message of hope and new life.

I turn and look within,

I would rather stay locked up in my little world,



You are nudging me Lord,
You are using these beautiful little creatures to call me forth,
There is something within me that I have to share,
A word, a message, an invitation to others to be,
You invite me to give an affirmation, a simple little gift of self,
Something of self to share that just might invite another to see
their

Giftedness, potential, wonder, imagination...

Nudge me Jesus out of my complacency,

Nudge me Jesus out of my lethargy,

Nudge me Jesus out of my selfishness,

Nudge me Jesus to move into the life of another,

And share peace, kindness, hope, consolation...

Nudge me Jesus to be Your presence that calls forth

A new beginning,

A new possibility where there was none before,

A new presence of You...

Nudge me Jesus to be a sign of Your resurrection!

A sign of the tomb that is broken open!

A sign that the stone is rolled away!



June 13, 2025 - Friday

“May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”

Dear Jesus,

Before we leave the gathered assembly we are blessed. How beautiful to receive a blessing. A blessing is meant to offer us strength, protection, and courage to go forth now and give expression to all the many graces we have received in this special Eucharistic celebration.

Jesus we are blessed in the name of the trinity.

We invoke God the Father's presence for our journey. God the Father comes to fill us with His fatherly love which is unconditional, always present, steadfast, eternal, all embracing. Like a parent, God the Father will walk with us lifting us up when we fall, encouraging us when the road is difficult, and carrying us on His back when we falter. He is the magnificent One, the all encompassing One, Father Glorious One.

We invoke the Holy Spirit who energizes us and ignites the fire of His presence within us. The Holy Spirit ignites the fire of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety or prayer and fear of the Lord or a standing in awe and wonder before the Lord. Such beautiful gifts nurture our journey and make it become a dynamic relationship that we can celebrate.

Jesus You are that important gift of the trinity that puts us into a living relationship with the person who became both human and divine. In You we know the God/man who shares our pain, walks our walk, enters into deep intimacy with us, dies and rises and is our saving Lord. You show us, in the flesh, God's great love.

We give praise and thanks that You are a Trinity who blesses us.

We open our hearts to receive Your blessing.

Bless us that we might be Your holy presence in our world.

Bless us that we might be Your Light that shines as a beacon for others to come and know the presence of God's omnipotence.

Bless us that we might be a tender heart that receives the heart of another seeking the healing of Your mercy.

Bless us that we might be a bowl of water and a towel to carefully wipe the foot of a neighbor.

Bless us that we might be a blanket of love to hold a broken heart.

Bless us that we might be the sunshine shining with a smile upon the face of a child forlorn and afraid.

Bless us that we might be the voice that speaks the word needed to be heard among violent voices.

Bless us that we might be the hand of gentleness that guides in the midst of disturbing blows.

Bless us that we might be the teaching gift in the midst of waywardness.

Bless us that we might be the compassion that beholds.

Bless us that we might be the one who is silent in the midst of cacophony so as to hear Your voice.

Bless us that we might be the memory that heals.

Bless us that we might be the stillness that creates peace.

Bless us that we might be the visit of God in the midst of gloom.

Bless us that we might be the laughter that tells us life is good.

Bless us that we might be the presence that holds another with light.



*Bless us that we might share the bright and beautiful of
Your Glorious Presence.*

June 14, 2025 - Saturday,

“Go for the Mass is ended.”

Dear Jesus,

“Go” is not always an easy word to respond to especially when it seems to be said directly and firmly. I have been directly told to leave. Now I know Jesus, if I needed to stay You would definitely accompany me and welcome my stay. But I know it is time to move forward! And no doubt You move forward with me!

Jesus, I have been equipped for a special mission. It is time for me to engage with You in the world. I must move out and meet You, yes indeed look for You in the dailiness of my life, see You with my eyes and heart. I must embrace You with my arms and soul. I carry You there. I can do this because I have been incorporated into Your paschal mystery, united with You in Your dying and rising.

St. Oscar Romero said,

“When we leave Mass,

We ought to go out

The way Moses descended Mount Sinai:

With his face shining,

With his heart brave and strong

To face the world’s difficulties.”

Jesus in each Mass we are shining with You that we might -

Bring good news to the poor,

Speak a word of truth to those seeking to understand,

Embrace caring actions that save and love our

environment, Use peaceful actions that put a stop to violence,

Surround with healing presence those wounded by:

Negative words of hate and insincerity,

Unforgiving words that crush the spirit,

False and lying words that lead to darkness.

Be Your presence Jesus to all those with broken hearts and spirits yearning to know Your face and kindness. To go forward is a beautiful, courageous, saving act. As Psalm 89 says, we “sing of the Lord’s unfailing love” in all we do and say and are. The Eucharist has empowered us.

Pope Francis writes: “The Eucharist is a sacrament of communion, which draws us out of our individualism in order to live together as disciples. It gives us the certainty that all that we have, all that we are, if it is taken, 1`blessed, and given, can by God’s power, by the power of His love, become bread of life for all.”



In the following days our reflections will draw from the many Solemn Blessings of the Church

As we are sent forth, the Church invites us to be blessed in the name of the Trinity. On certain occasions we may receive an extended blessing when we call to mind the wonderful works of the Lord and His saving power in our lives. The whole liturgy is filled up with the salvific blessings of Jesus. Calling to mind the many works of God in our lives celebrates their presence and grace once again.

Let us acknowledge the great gift to be blessed in the name of the Holy Trinity. We are nestled deep into the saving powers of God as Father who has come to call us by name, hold us in His majestic arms of love, enliven us in His illuminating light of goodness and faithfulness. We are sent by Jesus who in His very call to us has given us the power to answer that call, who died and rose for us that we might be redeemed, who has sent us forth now to transform the whole world. We carry the Holy Spirit, the animator and energizer whose gifts do not let us grow weary but strengthen us in hope for the journey until we are once again at home in our heavenly place for eternity.

June 15, 2025 - Sunday

At the Nativity of the Lord

“...May God, who willed that the great joy of His Son’s saving Birth be announced to shepherds by the Angel, fill your minds with the gladness he gives and make you heralds of his Gospel.”

Dear Jesus,

In this Christmas blessing we are reminded that God is a God of great joy and gladness. I have a daily reminder of these qualities of God in Mary, Your mother. On my dresser, I wake up every morning to looking upon a statue of Mary called “Our Lady of the Smile.” Yes, I do believe I see Mary smiling upon me, each day, in all beauty, gladness and joy in this simple statue.

St. Therese of Lisieux is said to have gone through a period in her life when she felt a deep, deep sadness overtaking her. This depression lasted for weeks. Therese was so despondent that she had difficulty getting out of bed. Then one day she awoke and looked at the statue of the Blessed Mother. She had never seen her as she saw her that day. The Blessed Mother was smiling upon her through the statue. The smile seemed to pour so much joy and gladness into her that she immediately got up and her despondency left. It was the joy on Mary’s face that shone with brightness into her heart that saved her and brought new life into her soul.

Smile upon me loving God and illumine my soul with Your joy.
Smile upon me gracious God that I might dance with delight in thanksgiving for all Your Grace poured out upon me.
Smile upon me gentle God that I might take Your hand and know your deep peace that is a source of contentment.
Smile upon me wondrous God as I delight in the stars and moon, the galaxies and stunning universe at nightfall.
Smile upon me creative God that fashions and shapes elephants, kangaroos, peacocks and eagles that stir up gladness and laughter.

Smile upon me kind and loving God who rouses my soul to move from melancholy to cheerfulness as I watch the children play.

Smile upon me God who creates the sun to shine with brightness and glory.

Smile upon me God who draws a loving heart then fills it with colorful feelings and embraces, that empathizes with tenderness and gentle glee in me.

Smile upon me God when I do crazy things like turn down the wrong road way but enjoy the new landscape, forget somebodies name but still recognize all their giftedness, put salt in the cherry pie instead of sugar but am able to laugh at myself,

Smile upon me God when I plan the wrong lesson and teach by “winging it” but soon discover I am doing a better job than I could ever imagine if I had taught the planned lesson.

Smile upon me God as I sit outside in the midst of winter enjoying this 70 degree weather. What a God of surprises You are!

Jesus let me feel Your smiles each morning so I can put to rest those negative feelings that want to overtake me. It is so much wiser to let Your gentle smile attach itself to my face and to the inner depths of my heart as I walk out my door and say: “Here world I come.”



Smile upon me Mary, Mother of God, so my soul will soar as I magnify the Lord!



June 16, 2025 - Monday

Blessing for the Beginning of the Year

“May He give you integrity in the faith, endurance in hope, and perseverance in charity with holy patience to the end.”

Dear Jesus,

As I reflect upon this blessing prayer my heart turns to the beautiful St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first American born saint (August 28, 1774 – January 4, 1821). In her life she displays each of the qualities in this prayer and invites us to practice them in our lives.

Elizabeth’s faith journey was one filled with “integrity.” She listened to your call Jesus, starting with growing in love with Psalm 23, taught to her by her stepmother Charlotte during her teen years. Later after her husband died, in Italy, she returned home to New York and there heard you Jesus again whispering in her heart, inviting her to join the Catholic faith. She listened and responded with a loving “yes.” Elizabeth then heard you beckon her on a mission as she listened to Your voice through Bishop John Carroll who asked her to consider beginning a Catholic School System in Baltimore. Again, Elizabeth trusted in Your presence in her life and said “Yes” to being a true disciple. What developed was not only the first Catholic School system in the United States that continues to flourish to this day but also a community of Sisters called the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph which became the first community for religious women in the United States. They continue to exist and serve the poor and those in need.

Jesus, make my faith like that of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton filled with integrity, alive with an ability to hear Your voice and say “YES, here I am!”

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton endured in hope, especially as she attended to her husband, who died early in their marriage, then to her children whom she offered a tender love as a single mother. She never gave up on her sons, who sometimes were rude and unruly young men, difficult to handle. She loved her girls who remained close to her side. She experienced deep depression when her first daughter Annina died of tuberculosis. But she did not give up hope and eventually came around to understand the mysteriousness of God's plans. Then she was struck with Rebecca's sickness that lasted five years. She eventually died at fourteen years of age. She did not give up. She continued mothering her three other children. Elizabeth Ann Seton believed that all of this grieving, loss, and sadness only expanded her heart so that she could love ever more. It taught her what true tenderness of heart looked like. Especially, it would make her able to love all the children who would later be given to her in the Catholic School system. This is a "pilgrim of hope."

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton displayed "holy patience." With no college degree yet she began the whole Catholic School System in the United States. It all began with six students in a cold school house in which they were boarders. This was not a school for the elite. It was for the poor and those who were in need. The school continued to grow.

The sisterhood continued to grow as well. She had worries, fleas, cold and snow, and begging to do. For most of us it would seem like a head ache. For St. Elizabeth Ann Seton it became a joy to do the Lord's work. She believed that her job was to especially love the children. Only could they really learn unless they were loved. She saw child after child not loved and held them tenderly to her heart. She teaches us the power of love to make a child whole. This was the greatest gift she could give. It had to be given before learning could take place. This is the gift of a nurturing, patient mother. Help us Jesus to lift up the gift of all nurturing mothers.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's heart was enlarged by charity. It was best displayed on the evening of her death, she is said to have checked to make sure that the children in the poor school had enough for dinner. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, filled with the love of God continued to nurture others with that love until she died. Jesus, from St. Elizabeth Ann Seton may we learn the true art of tender hearted nurturing of Your presence in each other.



June 17, 2025 – Tuesday

Solemn Blessing For the Holy Spirit

*“...May the wondrous flame that appeared above the disciples,
powerfully cleanse your hearts from every evil and pervade them
with its purifying light.”*

Dear Jesus,
You come to us as “the Light.”

Yes, I am “the Light” ...

I am the Light that burns brightly in Your heart,

And nothing can terminate this Light.

I am the Light that floods Your soul with peace everlasting,

I am the Light that shines into every cracked crevice because of
sin or pain and my brightness bursts apart any dark shadows and
makes beauty bright in surprising places.

I am the Light that comes to soothe broken wounds with warm
oils of caring healing that relaxes all hurt.

I am the Light that shines bright through all grief inviting one to
just “be in my loving arms,”

I am the Light that brings the brightness of forgiveness to those
who come as they are to me seeking amends,

I am the Light pouring Grace into the tenderness of a heart that is
seeking to know and love me,

I am the Light that lights other lamps across the land until joy and
wonder and hope are lit up for the world to experience,

I am the Light that moves souls to take a leap into faith trusting
that my hand will guide their journey,

I am the Light that asks my beloved to not be afraid but have
courage that I will sustain them wherever they may travel,

I am the Light that bursts apart all darkness and conquers all fear
and sings in joy the song of resurrection jubilation, God is alive!

I am the Light whose eternal flame is Love!

June 18, 2025 - Wednesday

Solemn Blessing for Ordinary Time III

“May almighty God bless you in his kindness and pour out saving wisdom upon you...May he turn your steps towards himself and show you the path of charity and peace.”

Dear Jesus,

Step by step I want to move towards You. I know Your ability to turn me around and let me face You so I can look into Your eyes as I walk towards You. Your eyes meet mine and deeply You beckon me forward. Invitation is present in those eyes, not coercion or demand but gentle love is the carpet You lay before me to walk upon. Your invitation includes arms that are wide open gesturing to me to meet You in a warm embrace. There is nothing cold or distancing about You. There is nothing about You that ever pushes me aside. You simply open Your arms in invitation again. You don't speak a lot of words. When it comes to such loving invitations to meet You it is more what You don't say that matters the most. The language of silence in the smile of love speaks far more than any words can speak. I come forward to meet You. I walk forward with my steps directed toward You in blessing and am held so tightly to Your heart. It is the love in Your heart that ministers to my heart which is torn and feeling abandoned. Your heart comes with the deepest abiding peace I have ever felt. This deep peace enfolds me and turns the negativities in me into overwhelming gratitude that You should care for me. My thoughts of woundedness turn around to thoughts of Your love for me always there for me. It is this great healing power of Your presence that makes me ready to return Your love to others.

We meet you and I. Our eyes meet. You look into my eyes. I look into yours and only see deep love. Your hands touch my shoulders. Your touch is so firm, strong yet gentle and kind. Tears fall so gently and you kindly wipe them away. This is a meeting of grace being poured upon my soul, wisdom being

poured into my heart. I feel your heart beat, you feel mine. Grace has enveloped me.

My heart now wants to speak charity and peace because You overwhelm me with healing. That charity and peace is the least I can give to others in gratitude for what You have given to me. This blessing I wish to share with others comes forth from the great blessing You have blessed me with. I see in new ways now. I hear Your voice in precious gentle ways appealing to me. I hear Your request in the hearts of others now who need Your blessing and I want to serve only You. I want to pour forth the blessing You have given to me. My words to others can become Your words if I unite them to You. My arms can become Your arms. You in me given so others might have life. I must decrease so You must increase in me. That is true charity and peace given to others. Help me Jesus to give only You.



June 19, 2025 - Thursday

Solemn Blessing For the Dedication of a Church

“May God, the Lord of heaven and earth, who has gathered you today for the dedication of this church make you abound in heavenly blessings. Amen. And may he, who has willed that all his scattered children should be gathered together in his Son, grant that you may become his temple and the dwelling place of the Holy Spirit. Amen. ...”

Dear Jesus,

As I pray with this blessing there is no doubt in my mind that You would want Your Holy Spirit to abound in great power in this holy church building that is being dedicated. However, I further sense that in this blessing prayer, You are calling us to realize that each one of us, Your holy people, are Your holy temple and therefore a dwelling place for the Holy Spirit. If we are that temple, then we have certain responsibilities which include gathering together the scattered children of God and caring for them as Jesus, You the Good Shepherd, cares for us.

As the temple of God, Jesus, cleanse me to be holy as You are holy.

As the temple of God, Jesus, sweep me clean of those sins that exclude and alienate Your people.

As the temple of God, Jesus, give me an extravagant unconditional love for Your people.

As the temple of God, Jesus, help me to learn the art of welcome.

As the temple of God, Jesus, help me to extend a deep and holy welcome to stranger and foe, peace maker and alien, refugee and immigrant, friend and neighbor.

As the temple of God, Jesus, let me not fear to pray with others in silence, in times of anxiety, in times of pain, in times of questioning, in times of joy, in times of loneliness, in times of confusion, in shocking times and distraught times.

As the temple of God, Jesus, show me how to be a spiritual guide when others can't discern the direction to take, or are overwhelmed by life's many challenges.

As the temple of God, Jesus, let me startle others out of their complacency and lethargy and not be afraid to take strong moral stands even if I must stand alone.

As the temple of God, Jesus, let me embrace the challenge that comes with being priest, prophet and king, in Your footsteps.

As the temple of God, Jesus, I pray with all my heart, Amen, let it be so.



June 20, 2025 – Friday

From Prayers Over the People

“Be gracious to your people, O Lord, and do not withhold consolation on earth from those you call to strive for heaven...”



Dear Jesus,

As I ponder this blessing prayer my eyes and heart turn to this Icon of You Jesus offering abundant consolation to dear Peter, who represents all of us, as he finds himself drowning in the sea. We hear Your invitation Jesus to get out of the boat and come to You. We are brave and take the initial risk to walk toward You who are standing there to greet us. We didn't realize how rough the waters would be.

We had high hopes. Our love for You stirred deeply within us but than obstacles began standing in the way. So when the going got tough we turned away. Jesus, You were still calling, but we looked in a different direction. Suddenly we realized that the waters were getting deep. It was getting harder and harder to get back to You. In fact, the water was going to overtake us and pull us completely away from You. We felt the fear. Thank goodness we remembered Your deep love for us. We remembered Your voice that had first called us. We remembered Your invitation. You wanted us to keep our eyes and most of all our heart on You. So we decided to call out once more.

JESUS! JESUS! JESUS! COME! SAVE US! Jesus, You heard our plea. Just like that Jesus You were there and immediately You reached down deeply into the sea and pulled us up.

I remember the day You pulled me up out of my despair and troubles. It was a dark day. I thought Your comfort and consolation would never come to me. I wanted to give up totally. What was I to do? You seemed to have no answers for me Jesus. There I was without work, without an income, without something to look forward to in the future, without meaning, without hope. I was filled with so much fear. I couldn't eat or drink. I felt so completely empty inside. How could this be? How could things be so sorrowful. Where were You God? I asked the question over and over. I heard no answer. I just didn't know how much longer I could go on like this. Friends would come to visit and tell me to, "Hang in there." But I wondered if they ever could understand the depth of my sadness.

I didn't feel Your hand right away. But slowly, over time, something was changing in me. I knew I was being pulled forward. It was slow going. I refused to give up. Your hand was pulling. I decided to keep praying even if I didn't hear You. I even spoke with a few spiritual leaders. Some gave me typical answers but it was ok. I hung onto those answers. Something was happening. Slowly Your hand pulled me forth and there I was shining like a star in Your presence.

You took me by both hands and we danced upon the waters. Oh Jesus we still dance upon the waters. Much has happened since then. You keep teaching me how to walk upon those tumultuous waters. Every once in awhile I start sinking again. You are there to offer me "consolations." You pull me forth into a new dance. You keep teaching me how to surrender, how to trust, how to believe. This is what faith is about.

Then You, Jesus, pull me close to Your heart. Those big robes wrap around me and I can hear Your heart beat. You make it clear to me that Your heart is beating for my heart. You embrace me with unconditional love that makes me whole and alive.

Thank-you Jesus.

This is an Icon of consolation. It is an Icon of You, Jesus rescuing us in our deepest of troubling times and in those not so deep of troubling times. It is an Icon telling us You always take us by the hand and pull us to Your heart. And then it is time for the dance to begin.

How gracious You are to Your people!



June 21, 2025 - Saturday

From Prayers Over the People

“Lord God, from the abundance of your mercies provide for your servants and ensure their safety, so that, strengthened by your blessings, they may at all times abound in thanksgiving and bless you with unending exultation...”

As I read the above blessing prayer my heart turned to another blessing prayer that sings the blessing of Jesus, the Christ all around us. It is an early Celtic prayer which goes like this:

My Christ! My Christ! My shield, my encircler,
Each day, each night, each light, each dark:
My Christ! My Christ! My shield, my encircler,
Each day, each night, each light, each dark.

Jesus, Son of Mary,
Be near me, uphold me, my treasure, my triumph,
In my lying, in my standing, in my watching, in my sleeping.

My helper, my encircler,
My strength everlasting.

Dear Jesus,

Your blessing upon us is truly the strength that sustains us, the protection that keeps us safe, the encircling power that animates us in our day to day activity.

A blessing from You is a gift and treasure that surprises us on our journey. It is often filled with overflowing joy and wonder. Take for instance the blessing of Your presence coming to me through Lily on Saturday as we began our First Eucharist Prep Fest. Lily, a second grader, at 9AM, as our process is about to begin, arrives before me with a precious little loom band of a cross that she has made for me!

What a surprise blessing! Here I am suddenly beholding all the beautiful love put into this inch and a half white little cross that she has manipulated! What a beautiful gift of prayer for me. I treasure the white little cross on my desk as a sure sign of Your presence so close to me. It is so tiny and yet it abounds with her innocent joyful blessing from You.

I softly hear the parents blessing their children as they say: “(Child’s Name) You are a big fish Jesus has caught!” And then there is a big hug and kiss they give to the child. And the child smiles and laughs. It was a ritual blessing I invited them to share as they concluded their time together. To watch it play out was an experience filled with grace and Your radiant love. My interior self is moved by the power of Your presence Jesus making a tender touch on their hearts. Your blessing stirring in their insides through simple words and actions. Most blessings, like this one, are very simple yet gracefully filled with Your presence.

Each week my heart is moved with wonder as I watch our leaders of prayer work with the children in Liturgy of the Word with Children. I didn’t know how they would take it when I told them we wouldn’t be coloring or using markers on pictures during this event. But they picked up on it right away. Of course they said, You Jesus are in the hearts of the children and we will call You forth. So now we have ukuleles, harmonicas, little projection units, singing, storytelling, teenagers telling the stories of You Jesus by heart, felt boards with figures to help tell the Gospel stories and a beautiful group of women who support and love each other. This group of women are a blessing given to bless. They bless the children and each other and members of the faith community each week. Jesus You are a beam of God’s sunshine smiling upon children and whoever comes in contact with Geralyn, Betsy, Alyssa and Laura on Sundays.

Jesus, my helper, my encircler,
Jesus, my strength everlasting.
Jesus, my blessing.

June 22, 2025 - Sunday

From Prayers Over the People

"Bestow increase of heavenly grace on your faithful, O Lord; may they praise you with their lips, with their souls, with their lives; and since it is by your gift that we exist, may our whole lives be yours..."

Dear Jesus,

As I ponder this blessing prayer I am reminded of two very beautiful Suscipe Prayers in our Catholic Faith Tradition.

"Suscipe" comes from the Latin word "receive." It reminds us of the offertory prayers of the Church in which we ask You to "receive our gifts." In this context it refers to two leaders in our church asking God to "receive all of who they are in their very person." It is a prayer of complete surrender to God.

St. Ignatius Loyola (1494-1596) wrote a "Suscipe" prayer that many of us are very familiar with. It goes like this:

"Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace, that is enough for me."



There is another woman, Sr. Catherine McAuley (1778 -1841) who is now on the path to becoming a saint. Presently she is called a “Venerable.” Sr. Catherine began the Sisters of Mercy and is recognized for many contributions to Catholic education, spirituality and having a heart for the poor. She wrote the following “Suscipe:”

“My God, I am yours for time and eternity.
Teach me to cast myself entirely
into the arms of your loving Providence
with a lively, unlimited confidence in your compassionate,
tender pity.
Grant, O most merciful Redeemer,
That whatever you ordain or permit may be acceptable to me.
Take from my heart all painful anxiety;
let nothing sadden me but sin,
nothing delight me but the hope of coming to the possession of
You
my God and my all, in your everlasting kingdom.”

I have found myself especially attracted to this second “Suscipe” prayer because my heart longs to fall into the arms of a gracious God, trusting in God’s everlasting compassion and tenderness. Such words resonate with my understanding of who God continues to be for me.

Knowing that I am challenged to often face troubling anxiety I am pleased that Catherine identifies it as a reality of something that often lodges within.

Catherine also makes clear that in my living relationship with God sin causes a “sadness” whereas coming to be possessed by You causes a “delight.” God You are “my all.” These words make ever clear to me that I am in a tender relationship with You my God.

Jesus help me to live out both of these “Suscipe” prayers and realize our lives are Yours.

“Into Your hands Oh Lord I commend my spirit.” (Psalm 31:5)



Sr. Catherine McAuley
(1778-1841) Began the
Sisters of Mercy
I am touched by Sr. Catherine's smile and her eyes
that speak of a gentleness,
kindness, compassionate
heart, one truly filled with
the mercy and love of God.
Her portrait speaks of a
Presence of God deep
within.

June 23, 2025 - Monday

From Prayers Over the People

*“Bestow the grace of Your kindness upon your supplicant people,
O Lord, that formed by you, their creator, and restored by you,
their sustainer, through your constant action they may be
saved...”*

Dear Jesus,

This beautiful blessing prayer reminds me of how You are the potter and we are the clay in Your hands. You are constantly forming, shaping and reshaping us. I am reminded of the prayer by St. Irenaeus (130 -202):

It is not thou
That shapest God,
It is God that
Shapest thee.
If then thou Art
The work of God,
Await the hand of the
Artist who does all
Things in due season.
Offer Him thy heart,
Soft and tractable, And
Keep the form in which
The Artist has fashioned thee.
Let thy clay be moist, lest
Thou grow hard and lose
The imprint of His Fingers.

We are in Your hands and You make beautiful formations out of each of us. However, we are reluctant to see the beautiful formation that You are creating and we twist and turn in hopes of being a different formation than what You desire. Yet You behold the beauty You see within us. You do not give up on the magnificence of that beauty.

Your work continues as You wrestle with our sinfulness, never abandoning the radiance of Your goodness that You see within us. That life You will strive with all Your heart to bring forth, no matter what our resistance.

As we are clay in Your hands You act as “restorer” and “sustainer.”

Jesus, Your hands create an openness in me.

Jesus, Your hands heal a divide in my heart.

Jesus, Your hands shape and reshape how I can share the gifts You have given to me.

Jesus, Your hands softly help me to remember Your lasting love.

Jesus, Your hands invite me to overcome barriers that block my vision.

Jesus, Your hands twist and turn me so that I can be soft and gentle with others.

Jesus, Your hands make me brave enough to extend forgiveness.

Jesus, Your hands make me strong enough to walk forward with courage to do Your will.

Jesus, Your hands shape my hands to fit your hands so that I can feel safe taking You by the hand.

Jesus, Your hands form me so that I can bend in peace to encircle You with an embrace.

Jesus, Your hands shape me so that I can roll away stones that keep me from bursting out with new life.

Jesus, Your hands shape me into a peace gift that sings a song of hope.

Jesus, Your hands shape and form me into a beautiful gift given to make the world sing Alleluia.

Jesus Your hands shape the clay that I am so that I can shine with Your Light in a dark world.



June 24, 2025 - Tuesday

From Prayers Over the People

“May your faithful people rejoice, we pray, O Lord, to be upheld by your right hand, and, progressing in the Christian life, may they delight in good things both now and in the time to come...”

Dear Jesus,

I love the words “rejoice” and “delight” in this blessing prayer. Your people are invited to enter into these verbs which carry so much splendor in Your Kingdom.

“The joy of the Lord is my strength” is a tune I grew up learning. So often it comes to mind and heart. It is true, when I feel a deep joy in my God, I am inspired to do my best work. There is a creativity and energy that flows from me that makes my heart sing and even dance inwardly. I want to be productive.

What is this joy? It is the joy that God knows my name. It is the joy that God has kept me safe in the embrace of His arm. It is the joy that God has used my gifts to bring praise to His name. I have been His servant. It is the joy of knowing that I have been a light making a path that will help others to find a way, to see new possibilities, to walk in newness of life.

I rejoice when I know God’s nearness, when I feel like God has let His life to be revealed through me – through a word I spoke, an action I have taken, an affirmation I have made. Thank-you Jesus.

Then there is the awesome word “delight.” I delight in You Lord when I look at Your handiwork such as the moon, stars, sun, the whole solar system that sparkles, dazzles and shines in wonder. I am part of this great big cosmos. In fact, I offer a dance in the midst of this splendorous delight.

I delight when I look at the mountains and rocks, the water ways, seas and oceans, the streams and green pastures, the trees and plant life. Here is the home that God has given to me to cherish. I delight in this gorgeous home.

I delight in friendship, in the gift of people. I remember St. Irenaeus (2nd Century AD) who said, "The glory of God is men and women fully human, fully alive. I wonder at the human brain, the internal organs, the ability to feel and see, the ability to have a soul. What a delight the human person is! Thank-you Jesus!

I delight and rejoice in Your real presence Jesus that is here with us. There is nothing that can be more marvelous than that! Thank-you Jesus!

Pope Francis said, "We need smiling Christians, not because they take things lightly, but because they are filled with the joy of God, because they believe in love and live to serve."



June 25, 2025 - Wednesday

From Prayers Over the People

“Turn the hearts of your people always to you, O Lord, we pray, and as you give them the help of such great patrons as these, grant also the unfailing help of your protection...”

Dear Jesus,

Help my heart to always turn to You.

When I feel like I want to hide from You because I am ashamed of my sin and find it hard to look into Your face, turn my heart toward You.

When I am overwhelmed with work and responses to make and forget that You are close by standing ready to help me, turn my heart toward You.

When I am caught in anxiety and overwhelmed with fear that I will fail or will not succeed in moving forward, turn my heart toward You.

When I forget that You are closer to me than the air I breathe, ready to help me, turn my heart toward You.

When I have disgraced Your name, and don't know how I can return to You, turn my heart toward You.

When I am crushed to the core in desolation, turn my heart toward You.

When I forget that You are a gracious God filled with unconditional love, always waiting for me to come back to You, always waiting with arms open to receive me, turn my heart toward You.

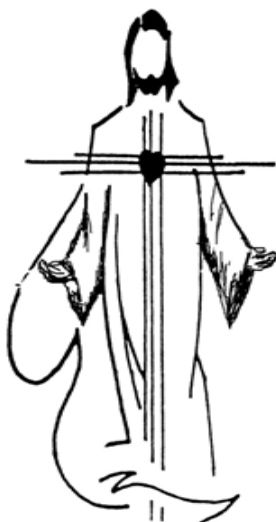
You are a God who is always in love with me,
Always ready to receive me,
Always ready to forgive and welcome me home into your arms.

You are a God who extends protection.
Your protection is found in the
mighty arms under which I hide.
Your arms that embrace me, hold
me to Your heart where I am hidden
in safety.

There is no evil that can come near
me in this place, dwelling in Your
heart, dwelling in Your mighty arms.

Oh Jesus, let me continue to fall in
love with You,
Do not let me stop turning towards
Your faithful Presence.
Do not let me stop turning towards
Your holy Light.
Do not let me stop turning towards
Your Love.

In this radiating Grace I rejoice and sing Your praises.
In these praises I am protected.
Thank-you Jesus.



Going Forward

As we come to the conclusion of this series on the Mass, we realize that during this past year we have experienced two historic events in the life of our Church: the death of Pope Francis and the election of a new Pope – Pope Leo XIV. Let us spend two days reflecting on how the deep spirituality of these leaders in our Catholic faith touch our reflection on the Mass.



June 26, 2025 – Thursday

The Call of Pope Francis

"The heavenly bread, which comes from the Father, is the Son himself made flesh for us. More than the bread that human beings need to survive, the gift of Jesus in the Eucharist satisfies the hunger for hope, the hunger for truth and the hunger for salvation that we all feel not in our stomachs, but in our hearts...He saves us, nourishing our lives with his own, and he will do this forever." (Pope Francis)



"The church of the perfect and pure is a room where there isn't a place for anyone; the church with open doors that celebrates around Christ is, on the other hand, a large hall where everyone — the righteous and sinners — can enter. The Eucharist is meant to nourish those who are tired and hungry along the journey, let's not forget this!" (Pope Francis)

"It is not enough for the church to be a small group of the usual people who gather to celebrate the Eucharist. We have to go into the city, encounter people, learn to recognize and reawaken the thirst for God and yearning for the Gospel. It will be that renewed thirst that brings people to the altar to encounter God in the Eucharist."

"God makes himself small like a piece of bread... so humble, hidden and sometimes invisible, that it is necessary that one's heart be large, open and vigilant to recognize, welcome and adore him." (Pope Francis)

Dear Jesus,

As I reflect upon these words of beloved Pope Francis I recognize that he did not only “talk” Eucharist but in his very life he became that Eucharistic presence that you called him to be. In his very person he demonstrated and shared Your real presence that he received at every Eucharist. As he chose to live a humble life at the Santa Marta Guesthouse among all the down to earth people who visited rather than the Apostolic Papal Palace, as he washed the feet of prisoners on Holy Thursdays, as he welcomed the homeless into the Vatican and celebrated his birthday with them, as he visited and sat with people of other great religions of the world, as he made himself present to the poor and held in his hands people whose faces and limbs were distorted and deeply wounded, as he preached that the church should be “a field hospital” where we all minister to the wounded among us his presence was a sign of Eucharist. May we Jesus live Eucharist as Pope Francis showed us.

As Pope Francis taught us to care for creation and commissioned the beautiful movie “the Letter” to stir the human race into action to love what You have created, as he taught Jesus that You never abandon us and that the Gospel is about “joy,” God’s mercy and compassion, as he chose not to be buried in the gilded walls of the Vatican but among the common people at the Basilica of St. Mary Major where he so often met You in the poor and prayed, as he chose a tombstone with no official title but only the word “Francis,” as he was buried in a simple wood casket we saw him in his person humbly proclaim Your Eucharistic presence among us. Jesus may we learn to understand how to humbly live Eucharist.

Most often Pope Francis taught us to pray Eucharist in a simple way. He really was not one for a lot of pomp and circumstance. He knew what really mattered in the Eucharistic celebration. It was You Jesus calling all of us, especially the poor and sinners to yourself to meet You for an embrace of Your unconditional love, for healing that went deep to the heart, for a Word that would

truly rouse us to be Your Light. Pope Francis pray for us that we might meet Your real presence that brings us out of our emptiness into the fullness of Your life.



June 27, 2025 – Friday

The Call of Newly Elected Pope Leo XIV

Since Pope Leo XIV has been newly elected Pope within the last weeks we have little writing to refer to that points directly to his views on Eucharist. However, from some of his words and actions we can begin to draw a reflection on how his life is definitely centered in Eucharist.



Pope Leo XIV's very first words to us delivered from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica were: "The peace of the Risen Christ, an unarmed peace and a disarming peace, humble and persevering. It comes from God, God who

loves us all unconditionally." This was the first gift Pope Leo wanted to give to us. Such a gift of peace permeates every Eucharist we celebrate.

"We want to say to the world, with humility and joy: Look to Christ! Come closer to Him! Welcome his Word that enlightens and consoles. Listen to His offer of love and become his one family: in the one Christ, we are one." This quotation is from Pope Leo's first inaugural Mass. As the Eucharist celebrates the Word of God, Pope Leo is calling us to be people of the Word!

Every Eucharist is "not a static activity" but "a dynamic activity." By this it is meant that we are always "moving, acting and becoming" more and more alive in Christ. Pope Leo talks about being "united

hand in hand with God and among ourselves, we move forward.” “Let us walk toward God and love one another.” He has said, “let us walk alongside each other as a missionary church.” When we do this “moving, walking, uniting hand in hand” the Holy Spirit, like in Eucharist, moves among us dynamically and creatively.

The Eucharist always sends us forth on mission. Pope Leo definitely has that missionary spirit of going forth to serve. In his first words to us he said:

“To all of you, brothers and sisters of Rome, of Italy, of the whole world, we want to be a Church of the Synod, a Church that walks, a Church that always seeks peace, that always seeks charity, that always seeks to be close, especially to those who suffer.”

Pope Leo in his inaugural homily speaks of the Church called to be “a sign of unity and communion.” Eucharist is meant to shape us into a community of people who are reconciled with each other and who love one another. We are called to receive the Body of Christ in the host and to become the Body of Christ meaning a People united in serving one another and the world. Pope Leo said, “I would like that our first great desire be for a united Church, a sign of unity and communion, which becomes a leaven for a reconciled world.”

“Brothers and sisters, this is the hour for love! The heart of the Gospel is the love of God that makes us brothers and sisters. With my predecessor Leo XIII, we can ask ourselves today: If this criterion “were to prevail in the world, would every conflict cease and peace return?” (Rerum Novarum, 21). This is the mission of Eucharist. As Jesus did, we go out with open arms to share love with the world around us.

Pope Leo has said that the Vatican may be a place where others may come to work out peace agreements from across the world. He definitely has a mission for peace. Eucharist calls us to peace.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy brought the following Icon as a gift to Pope Leo XIV. It is our Blessed Mother with the infant Jesus painted on a fragment of a crate used to store heavy artillery munitions, brought from near Izyum. The Icon is said to speak of the children who have suffered from the war and many of whom have been abducted and whose parents in Ukraine long for return. The Icon reminds us of all who suffer the pains of war.

In every prayer of the faithful and every offertory prayer we lay upon the altar we can place all those who suffer from a lack of peace in our world.

*Every Eucharist is a Prayer for the
Peace that Jesus gives.*



Dear Jesus,

As I ponder this beautiful Icon that speaks peace I pray that every Eucharist might teach me how to gather in my arms the hurting, the poor, the lost and forgotten, the broken hearted, the innocent children who long to feel a heart beating in love for them. May Eucharist make my heart tender so that Your children might find a home within me to “be” the gift You have created them to be. Jesus as I ponder these big hands on gentle Mary give me the graces to be big in compassion and mercy and to behold Your presence with a wideness of heart. As I look at Mary’s eyes focus upon your heart, let my eyes see deeply into the poor in the world and let my ears hear the whispers of Your heart calling me to act for an end to war, disunity, violence, fear and hate. As I ponder Mary seated against the pain of war, make me an instrument of Your peace. Make my brothers and sisters, who receive You in Eucharist, also instruments of Your peace. Amen. Let it be so.



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"Come and Eat"