

[Readings: Genesis 14:18-20; Psalm 110; 1 Cor. 11:23-26; Luke 9:11b-17]

This Sunday, fittingly, the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Jesus, after what seems like an eternity of anticipation, the U.S. bishops will officially begin the National Eucharistic Revival. Dioceses and parishes across the country will be holding special Eucharistic processions, such as will take place here in the Archdiocese of Detroit later today from the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament to Sacred Heart Major Seminary – a two mile long procession. Masses, Holy Hours and festivals to celebrate what we know to be true: that Jesus Christ is present with us today and always -- Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity— in the Most Blessed Sacrament.

A recent Our Sunday Visitor recently wrote of a conversation that took place decades ago between Catholic author Flannery O'Connor's and the novelist Mary McCarthy, herself raised Catholic, who said that, as she had matured, she had come to regard the Eucharist as just a symbol and "a pretty good one" at that. O'Connor replied, in a very shaky voice, "Well, if it's only a symbol, to hell with it." Of that exchange, O'Connor later wrote: "That was all the defense I was capable of but I realize now that this is all I will ever be able to say about [the Eucharist], except that it is the center of existence for me; all the rest of life is expendable."

How many of us can say with Flannery O'Connor that the Eucharist "is the center of existence for me; all the rest of life is expendable?" Would our children, our fellow parishioners, our co-workers, our friends say that this is true of us?

In the end, the success of the National Eucharistic Revival depends not on the bishops, but on each one of us. The more deeply we encounter Christ in the Eucharist, the more our lives will reflect that encounter. Saint Luke calls the Eucharist "the breaking of the bread." Saint Paul calls it "the supper of the Lord." Jesus says it is "the new covenant in His Body and Blood." Most of us use the words "Holy Communion" or "Most Blessed Sacrament." Pope Francis said that the Eucharist is not an award for good behavior, but medicine for the sick. None of us is worthy to have the Lord, "Come under our roof" as we say before receiving Holy Communion.

However you describe it, Eucharist is the centerpiece of the Catholic Christian experience. Especially as the Real Presence of Jesus. WHAT is the "Real Presence?"

That means that Jesus Christ is really and truly present in the Eucharist in His Body and Blood, Humanity and Divinity, under the form of bread and wine. Really! Someone – an atheist – once said, “If you Catholics really believed in the Real Presence, you would come up and receive Communion on your hands and knees!” He has more of an understanding and appreciation of the Eucharist than most of us!

There are other special words that speak of what we do when we have Eucharistic Adoration. I would like to take the words common to Adoration and apply them to what happens AFTER we leave here, WHEN we encounter one another, HOW we become, how we bring and how WE can be the Real Presence to our world. The words are Exposition, Adoration and Benediction.

First, **Exposition**. We expose ourselves for who we really and truly are. Psychologists say that we are an emotional Holy Trinity: the public person we display to others; the private person we display to our more intimate family and friends, and the person we are afraid to show to anyone for fear of guilt, shame, or misunderstanding. In a speech to the priests of Rome, Pope Francis said, “What determines the holiness of priests is not what happens here in church, but what happens after work in the rectory!” When we expose ourselves in our vulnerability, when we let others see us as God sees and knows us, we can acknowledge that we are all of one family and are all redeemed, saved, by the merciful peace and righteousness of God.

Second, **Adoration**. Picture it. The Golden Girls. Dorothy and her mother are sitting on the couch watching TV. But Dorothy is gazing with love in her eyes at her mother. She just sits and stares. Finally, Sophia says, “What are you doing?” Dorothy says, “Nothing, Ma. Just looking at you and loving you.” And Sophia says, “Well stop doing that. I’ve been wanting to pick my nose for the last five minutes!”

Parents, do you look lovingly at your children on a regular basis? Or do they see on judgement and criticism. Spouses, do you still look at each other with love in your eyes? That’s adoration. What do you do during Eucharistic Adoration? Sit quietly and let the Son shine in your soul, as Sr. Pat often says.

Have a silent conversation with the Lord. Pray your favorite prayers. Bring to mind all the blessings you have and give thanks.

Finally, **Benediction**. Blessing. We are blessed by the monstrance, which is a holder for the Blessed Sacrament in the form of the priest's host. The word monstrance means to display, to show. In our case, it means to make real what we celebrate within these walls. Pope Francis says the simplest ways we do this is when we perform the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Here are some other ways to do it: in public, in our homes, in our communities, in our country. In all of these ways, WE become a benediction, a blessing, to all those around us. That's one of the reasons why we have Eucharistic Processions in neighborhoods: to bring the Body of Christ into the world physically and sacramentally.

Exposition, Adoration, Benediction. Expose, adore, and bless.

Because today is Father's Day, I close with a short comment about fatherhood on this Father's Day written by Dr. Greg Popcak.

First of all, there IS a difference in parental roles. Mothering gives children the ability to tolerate stress more effectively; nurturing fathers give a greater capacity to regulate aggression. Together, moms and dads' unique gifts help kids develop a full range of language skills.

Multiple studies have shown that even in households where mothers are active in their faith, it is the father's level of involvement in a faith tradition that most consistently predicts whether a child will come to own their family's faith as an adult and allow their faith to have a practical impact on their life choices. Dads, the faith practice of your children depends on your own faith practice or lack of it.

While faithful moms convey a spiritual sensitivity to their children, faithful dads influence the degree to which faith is practiced and lived in the world. The science is clear. Mothers and fathers are not interchangeable, nor are they replaceable. Mothers are mothers and fathers are fathers.

The loss of a mother or a father is devastating, and the benefits lost by the absence of a parent of either gender simply cannot be made up for by filling that space with another caregiver of the same gender. That isn't a judgment on the nurturing skills of that same-gendered caregiver. It's just science. It turns out that Mother Nature simply doesn't care about gender politics, no matter how much progressive culture warriors try to re-educate her.

So, let's celebrate the uniqueness of dads and rejoice in all the ways fatherhood is a blessing to our children. A Happy and Blessed Father's Day to all who serve as Dads to us! AMEN!