

Last month, Father explained that the Church in the United States has begun the second of a three-year Eucharistic Revival and that Bishop Johnston has asked us to preach about the Eucharist on the first Sunday of every month this year.

Well ... today we celebrate the feast of the Transfiguration which revealed Jesus' **divinity** to His three chosen apostles. The Transfiguration and Eucharist are examples of Christ's divinity. When we celebrate the Eucharist, we celebrate nothing less than Jesus Christ ... **truly** present ... under the appearance of bread and wine ... not merely a memorial or representation ... but ... a ... **reality**. ... This is the **central** belief of our Faith. It is what makes us **Catholics**. Yet some ... who **call** themselves Catholics believe that one piece of bread ... consecrated or not ... is the same as any other. According to some very troubling statistics published by U.S. Catholic ... only 46% of Americans who call themselves Catholics ... know and believe what the Catholic Church teaches about the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Let me be **clear** on this point! There *is* no doctrine ... that defines the Catholic Faith more than that of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ ... Body and Blood ... under the **appearance** of bread and wine. To profess that you are *Catholic* ... without a *profound* belief ... in this Real Presence ... is a *lie*! It is *hypocrisy*! And to partake of Holy Communion ... **without** the belief that Christ is truly present ... body and blood ... is to commit the grievous sin ... of *sacrilege*.

Believers of **many** faiths obey God's third commandment by coming together weekly to worship. Catholics obey this Commandment by celebrating **Eucharist** ... because no other form of prayer gives us the **intimacy** and union with Christ as does the Eucharist. In Eucharist, the

Risen Lord and each of us become as one. *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.* When we **receive** Jesus ... He takes us into Himself ... through Him, with Him, and in Him. We receive Christ and **Christ** ... receives us and we enter into **His** life to the **fullest** extent. We enter into the **totality** of Christ's incarnate life among us. We enter into ... "the Paschal Mystery".

His Father ... **Our** Father ... sent Jesus into the world with a **mission** and when we partake of the Eucharist, Christ's mission is then also **our** mission. We must take this true and real presence of Christ within us into the world. We come to the Eucharist to celebrate our **discipleship** and to seek the grace to live the **demands** of that discipleship. We must **live** what we celebrate at Eucharist ... in our parish community ... in the world.

What are these demands of discipleship? Jesus demands full and total participation at the Celebration of Eucharist, itself. Eucharist **cannot** be something we just watch; it is something we must **do**. We must not simply "receive" Holy Communion. We must enter **into** ... Holy Communion ... with Christ and ... with each other. Secondly, it means living a profound Christ-like ethic of life ... so our world can **tell** we are Christians ... by our love ... that the **world** might come to believe. When we hear: *Go forth ... the Mass is ended.* This is **Christ** ... sending us ... into the world.

Eucharist is the name used by many to refer to the Mass. Eucharist is based on a Greek word, meaning to give thanks. The whole celebration is a thanksgiving sacrifice ... and we have **so** much to give thanks for: from the beginning of Mass when we receive forgiveness for our sins, through the Liturgy of the Word telling us of all the wonderful deeds of God, to the gift of the Lord's presence and on to the final blessing.