

*Fr. Perozich comments —*

*Celebrating the traditional Latin Mass at home, when I do not celebrate at a parish, has given me some deeper insights into prayer, Eucharist, and evangelization.*

*At the end of each public Mass in English, I expand the dismissal, “The Mass is ended, go and announce Jesus Christ to the world.*

*That is exactly what is done in the TLM.*

*After the closing prayer, the priest says, “Ite, Missa est”, indicating the end of the rite of Thanksgiving worship and now the sending in Mission to go out and take what has been received to everyone.*

*Following a prayer to God, the priest blesses the people with God’s presence, grace, and power to carry out that mission.*

*Finally, chapter 1 of the gospel of John is proclaimed in order that the people sent on mission know what to say: who Jesus is and what He has done, and what He will do for those who believe in the name of Jesus.*

*Since most of us have a form of Alzheimers, where the tendency is to forget everything except the grudges, this repetition of sending, blessing, and instruction must be done repeatedly either by the priest, and if not, by the Catholic himself to urge each person onward to a love of Jesus and to bring that love to others in the Eucharist, the Thanksgiving for creation, redemption, sanctification, and eternal life.*

*It is an invitation to love and to be loved by the One whose love satisfies the soul like no other love can do,.*

*The Catholic Thing - <https://www.thecatholicthing.org>*

# **Eucharistic Revival, Thanksgiving, and the Call to Love**

*David G Bonagura, Jr.  
Wednesday, November 22, 2023*

**What motivates someone to attend Mass daily on his lunch break? To stop his car so he can make a visit to our**

## **Lord in the tabernacle? To confess his sins on a regular basis?**

**Such a person knows that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, that being with Him and receiving Him as often as possible is a tremendous blessing.** (This week especially it's good to remember that in Greek *eucharistein* means "to give thanks," which means every time the Eucharist is celebrated is a kind of Thanksgiving Day.) All this allows him to love and to serve Christ more effectively. Otherwise, he would not make these efforts.

Is knowledge of these essentials of faith alone sufficient to move him to do these things? If I think back to my high school years, I certainly learned the Church's teaching about Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist. Yet I never attended Mass on weekdays, even though I knew it was offered daily. I knew – I just didn't care.

Mindful of my own history in light of the ongoing Eucharistic revival, I recently put the test to my sixteen- and thirteen-year-old sons, the least pious of my children. "Define the Eucharist." They did so correctly. "Then how come you are not eager to go to Mass more regularly or to the holy hour on Fridays?" Awkward silence – as if they knew they were in trouble.

Our bishops have been working hard at bringing about a Eucharistic revival, which is the greatest collective spiritual effort that the American Church has initiated in my lifetime. Preaching and catechizing are essential components of this labor: a person cannot love what he does not know.

**Yet knowledge alone does not move the soul to love. It is necessary, but not sufficient.** Something more is required.

What is that something? **A personal relationship with Christ, which exists in varying degrees when a person believes deeply in the Lord and loves Him** as he loves his family and friends. To live, to foster, and to enjoy this relationship

– this friendship – **the person makes the effort to visit the Lord and receive Him as often as possible, as he would make the effort to spend time with other loved ones.**

Hence, we have another lens for viewing the Catholic understanding of the real presence: **our approach to the Eucharist is indicative of the liveliness of our faith, that is, of our love of Christ.** A successful Eucharistic revival, then, requires successful evangelization in equal measure. The goal of evangelization is to lead someone into friendship with Christ.

Of course, there is an element of the “chicken or egg question” in play. Preaching about the Eucharist is certainly not in competition with preaching about Christ more generally. Nor is there necessarily a chronological priority of one over the other. **The Eucharist can be the greatest of evangelizers, since it is Christ Himself leading the charge.**

Yet it does often seem that teaching the Eucharist is only as effective as one’s pre-existent relationship to Christ. A powerful case in point: In October, I took twelve high school students to St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City, where, under the auspices of the Napa Institute, 4,000 people [participated in Mass and a Eucharistic procession](#) <sup>[1]</sup> through the heart of Manhattan. Father Mike Schmitz offered the Mass and gave a superb homily on the Eucharist. It was an electrifying event, for me and all twelve students, none of whom had ever seen a procession like that.

But when I asked them a few days later if the experience had any effect on their faith, or if it would induce them to attend Mass during the week more often, the answer was no.

That lukewarmness should not dissuade us from more Eucharistic events – holy hours, processions, and special Masses can and must continue. But it does put the work of revival into a realistic context. Yes, we need events, and we need preaching to ignite a revival. But these things cannot be all we do – **teaching what the Eucharist is to someone who has little to no faith will likely accomplish little.**

What we need is for each of us to roll up our sleeves and **help others develop their relationship with Christ**. That is, we need to teach them to love our Lord. **Love has a power of perception that exceeds ordinary knowledge**. It is love that sees Christ present in the Eucharist.

How do we do this? My sons' reactions taught me that their relationship with our Lord needs serious work. So I have stepped up my **in-home catechesis**, and, above all, have urged them to put **more effort into Mass and prayer, which is the chief means of cultivating friendship with the Lord**.

When we are able, I make them come with me to the Friday holy hour (though they only have to stay for half). With Christ before them they can work on their relationship – or so I pray.

**Prayer is an essential piece: we must implore God to help us, for we can do nothing without Him. A Eucharistic revival is not primarily the result of our efforts, but of God's grace pouring down upon us.**

**The success of the Eucharistic revival, then, does not depend on “the Church” or “the bishops” or “better homilies” to do the hard work of evangelization [2] for us. It depends on God working through you and me as we direct others toward friendship with Christ. As Pope Benedict XVI put it in his post-synodal exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* [3], “The more ardent the love for the Eucharist in the hearts of the Christian people, the more clearly will they recognize the goal of all mission: *to bring Christ to others.*” (86)**

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URLs in this post:

[1] participated in Mass and a Eucharistic procession: <https://napainstitute.org/event/2024-procession/>

[2] evangelization: <https://www.thecatholicthing.org/2022/05/15/guerilla-evangelization/>

[3] *Sacramentum Caritatis*: [https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_exh\\_20070222\\_sacramentum-caritatis.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_ben-xvi_exh_20070222_sacramentum-caritatis.html)