

I wrote in my column in the last newsletter – that it is good for me to get away from time to time – as it allows me to get out of my box – and experience liturgy somewhere else – which then allows me to return with new appreciation and enthusiasm for who I am and for what I do.

But I also know when I'm away – it also allows you to get out of the box and experience someone else's preaching – and someone else's liturgical style.

I don't know about you – but I'm glad to be back. . . . and I certainly do appreciate who we are and what we do here at Holy Family. . .

There are two times in every Eucharistic Prayer used at Mass – when the priest calls upon the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first time – is calling that power upon the gifts of bread wine. As we will pray later:

“Great and merciful God, we ask you to send down your Holy Spirit to bless these gifts of bread and wine, that they may become for us the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ.”

Yes, it is not just my prayers as a priest, or our prayers as a community that makes this change occur on the altar-- it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that this happens. We gather here, so that we can receive the Body and Blood of Christ.

The other time the power of the Holy Spirit is called upon – comes after the Memorial Acclamation. In today’s Eucharistic Prayer – these are the words we will pray: “Through the power of our Spirit of love, include us now and forever among the members of your Son, whose body and blood we share.”

So we gather not just to get something while we are here– the Body and Blood of Christ – transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, we also gather here to *become* something: to become that which we receive, to become the Body and Blood of Christ. . . “members of God’s son – whose body and blood we share.”

As Fr. J. Glenn Murray, a very gifted Jesuit priest has a fondness of saying – and I have a fondness for quoting:

“What difference does it make if the bread and wine **on** the altar are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ – if those who gather **at** the altar – remain the same?????”

So what a privilege it is for us to be here Sunday after Sunday. Yes, how happy are we who are called to this supper. . .

But as with everything else in life – with great privilege – comes great responsibility. And that is why the document on the liturgy coming from the Second Vatican Council calls all of us – to have full, conscious, and active participation in celebrating the Eucharist.

What does that mean – or how can that look in our lives – what can we do to *have* full, conscious, and active participation???

I hate to sound like a broken record – because I know I have said this on more than one occasion, but I think a big part of that is attitude. Do we come to Mass on Sunday with the attitude that I am only fulfilling an obligation and possibly avoiding the fires of hell for fulfilling my obligation or do I come with the attitude that I am privileged to be able to gather with like-minded people and together we have the opportunity to give God our thanks and praise?

I think there is a big difference in being here because we think we have to – versus being here because we want to. Attitude is a big part of having full, conscious, and active participation in celebrating the Eucharist

Do I come with the attitude that I am here to be entertained and I'm here to get something out of Mass?

Or do I come with the attitude that *worship* has nothing to do with entertainment and that I cannot come here only asking what can I get without also asking myself what do I bring? What can I contribute to this gathering of like-minded people?

Do I come here, to Mass with the attitude that I am here to do my God-time and that this really doesn't have anything else to do with the rest of my week, with the rest of my life?

Or do I come with the attitude that I am here to get re-charged and re-energized so I can live the rest of the week committed to the values I hear about and experience here at the liturgy?

Again, as Fr. Murray would say – it doesn't do us a lick of good to come here for an hour if we think we can leave everything we have seen, heard, touched, received and yes – even smelled --on the front porch of the Church on our way back out the door – as we go about our business the rest of the week.

Mediocrity, he says, has no place in our worship and certainly has no place in our lives. *Worship* – naturally moves us to service of God and others – especially the least of our brothers and sisters.

Do I come here with the attitude that God can have a small piece of my life – an hour or so on Sunday, but God certainly can't have it all. . . as if there is a difference between what is God's and what is mine?

Or do I come here with the attitude that everything I have – as well as all I am – comes from God and belongs to God and that God can use me – my gifts, my time, my talent in whatever way God wishes to help make the kingdom more present?

Perhaps another way of stating that last attitude – is asking ourselves if we have cared enough about our commitment to this place and all we do here – to

have taken the time to pick up our stewardship packet??? And then to take the time to think about and pray about how we should respond.

Much like Dr. Martin Luther King – I have a dream. A dream not about our country – but about our Church. And the dream is simply that as weekends approach – week after week – year after year – individuals and families will make a conscious decision of what Mass they are going to attend together because it is a priority in their lives and then let everything else they have to do revolve around their worship. Rather than asking how we can possibly fit in Mass this weekend because of everything else we have to do?

Attitude makes a big difference.

“Through the power of your Spirit of love – include us now and for ever among the members of your Son, whose body and blood we share.”