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Daily Eucharist Old Fashioned?

By Capuchin Ron Smith



To assert that participation in daily Mass is something I enjoy might seem strange to some. Others might think that I haven't "updated" sufficiently in my understanding of Eucharist or religious life. Others may suspect that I need daily Mass in my life and pray for me. The last group is closest to the truth.

When I worked for the Church in Arizona, both women and men sometimes felt sorry for me simply because I was "still" a Catholic. After all, enlightened people have moved on. As one guy said: "I graduated from Christianity years ago." Another remarked: "Oh, I remember priests and being an altar server, but surely you don't put your faith in Catholic Rites, do you?"

Sincere people will differ on religious questions. What really matters to me? I need to find God's Will and Plan. Now that may seem old-fashioned, I know. I figure God has left us a great treasure in the Eucharist, an active gold mine, not a lost treasure. It is available daily if I make a commitment and put forth some effort. In Arizona I daily came down the mountain to Mass; it was 25 miles round trip. For me it was a central part of God's plan.

The benefits from encountering Jesus in His biblical Word and in the Sacrament are not measured by usual standards of feelings, or success. Faith matters have different ways of being discerned. Eyes of Faith are related to our inner self, our heart. The honor of being present to the greatest act of Love and the entire gift of God to me each day is hard to fathom. Why does God make such a humbling gesture? Why is God so vulnerable and open to possible rejection, neglect or abuse? In my mind, it is all linked to Jesus becoming human, giving His life for us and sending the Holy Spirit into our hearts for holiness.

In practice, I am aware of the different ways that Christ is present: in His word, in the assembled people, in the priest, and in a special manner, in the Sacred Body and Blood, under signs. And I am conscious that the "once for all" action of Calvary and Last Supper is renewed and made present for me today. It's the same historical event that touches time and eternity. Plus it registers in my heart that angels and the faithful departed, family, friars, and friends, participate every day in heaven, as we celebrate on earth. It's mysterious. It's a miracle. I enjoy miracles and there's plenty of them in Eucharist. All these "presences" and yet Jesus doesn't have to leave Heaven.



Vocation Update

However, these are not easy matters. “Seeing” what’s happening in Mass is demanding. Beyond externals, grace draws me into God’s mysterious acting presence and the prayer of Thanks and Praise, a Sacrifice, a Holy Banquet of Communion. I sometimes bask in the many layered truths of Faith about Eucharist in my worn copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It’s more than chicken soup for the soul, I sense.

I renew my innermost being as I prepare for Mass. Faith needs kindling. Eucharist is rich in meaning. It would be a betrayal if the Mass wasn’t also mission. It would be a tragedy if I left Mass not refueled to serve those in need.



...And will I know when I am the one broken and in great need?...

I fast before Eucharist from sin and food. I pray the Scriptures of the day, like so many of you do. I ask the Holy Spirit to stir my spirit so I am attentive and alert, to the best of my capacity. Respect and reverence are important to Christ, I think.



The Mass encourages and guides me to bloom where I am planted. It is sad if I pray for world peace, the end of hunger and AIDS, while not smiling at my neighbor, my God, or even the cardinal on the bird feeder outside the window...easier sometimes to reassure myself when I “offer up” pains for those far away, while neglecting those close at hand. It is my abuse of Mass when my practical charity does not flow into those nearest as well as far away. Examining my conscience and monthly Confession help.

I really drag some days. I forget to pray the readings beforehand. I watch a late Packer game and I’m not alert as I want to be. I can become distracted by anything while attending the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Some days I may look for distractions. The Spirit in my heart coaxes me back to the Presence, the mystery of Jesus, alive for us all. Never a mere object or thing, but through bread and wine, Body and Blood, Jesus is my daily reminder and power to do God’s Will. He is my daily call to holiness and my challenge of Gospel living as a Capuchin. I am so grateful. May Jesus be praised by more and more in daily Mass.



For more information about the process to become a Capuchin, visit www.CapuchinFranciscans.org

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