

THE MAGAZINE
OF THE CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF
JOLIET

Christ is our Hope

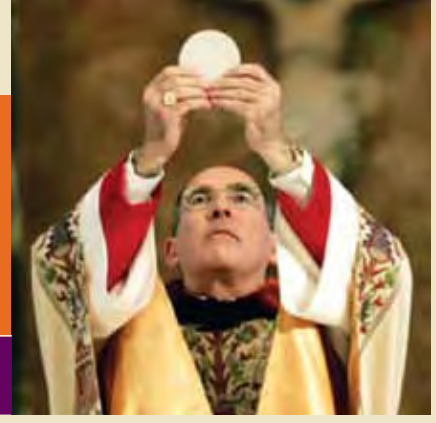
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Cristo Es Nuestra Esperanza



THE YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST BEGINS THIS MONTH

Draw closer to Jesus during the Year of the Eucharist



Do you have a petition for Bishop Sartain's prayer list? You may send it to him at: Bishop Sartain's Prayer List, Diocese of Joliet, 425 Summit St., Joliet, IL 60435-7193.

From the Bishop

On Holy Thursday evening, we begin a "Year of the Eucharist" in the Diocese of Joliet. Although in my heart are many reasons to do so (and I plan to write about them each month over the next year), one prayer encapsulates them all:

We can be confident that this is what God desires for us because, in the Eucharist, Jesus remains with us as spiritual food (as he said, "I am the Bread of Life") and assurance of his Father's undying faithfulness (his Covenant of Love). Everything we need and desire in life (and more!) can be found in the Lord Jesus and his gift of the Eucharist.

Do we sometimes forget that, in Jesus, we have everything? Do we go looking for fulfillment elsewhere, all the while missing the fact he is with us, within us, in the church, waiting for us to open our hearts and let him in? Even if we see ourselves as religious people, do we sometimes look beyond Jesus, or around him, forgetting we need look no further than him? And, if we see ourselves as active Catholics, do we sometimes take the Eucharist for granted, as if Sunday Mass were just one more religious activity among many?

If we live in a home strained by tension, do we wonder where peace is to be found? If we are lost and do not know where to turn, have we thought of turning to God but do not know how to do so?

We need a Year of the Eucharist to reawaken ourselves to the truth that, for us Catholics, the Eucharist is the absolute center of our lives – because, in the Eucharist, Jesus himself feeds us

and remains with us as a companion on the journey of life. We need a Year of the Eucharist to awaken within us as individuals and as a diocese a hunger for Jesus so profound that it inspires us to love him more, to surrender our very lives to him, to confess our faults and failings and to learn to live sacrificially. We need a Year of the Eucharist so we will never forget that, through his son Jesus, our heavenly Father saves us from evil and makes us holy.

You little ones in elementary school, Jesus loves you and comes to you in the Holy Eucharist! Learn to participate at Mass with all your heart and to revere Jesus' holy presence.

You teens and young adults, see, in the Eucharist, Jesus himself, your food and sure guide through years of growth and budding dreams.

You married couples, see in the Eucharist the very covenant sealed with the blood of Jesus, which is the origin and strength of your marriage.

You who seek to understand the Lord's plan for you no matter your age, let him issue that call from within by making the Eucharist your inspiration and strength.

You religious women and men, allow your daily participation at Mass to inspire your apostolate and become the source of the presence of Jesus you bring to those you serve.

You deacons, see in the Lord's

washing of the apostles' feet at the first Eucharist the symbol par excellence of your bond with Jesus the Servant.

And, we priests, ordained as ministers of the Eucharist: May we celebrate the sacraments with such fervor, faith, care and humility that we marvel at the mystery of the Lord himself at work in us, that we grow in awe of what he accomplishes through us. By our daily celebration of Mass, may we give ourselves even more generously to the Lord and his people, whose lives he purchased with his own body and blood. If he loves them so, can we love them less?

In his beautiful book, "He Leadeth Me," Father Walter Ciszek, S.J., wrote of his years of confinement in Soviet Russia. He was deprived of the Eucharist for many months, and he eventually went to heroic lengths to celebrate Mass in prison and in the camps. Once he found a way to say Mass secretly every day, he recognized he was doing so, not only for himself and the Catholics in the camps, but also for the spiritual good of people who did not even know he was doing so, including nonbelievers. He wrote, "I would go to any length, suffer any inconvenience, run any risk to make the bread of life available."

We need a Year of the Eucharist so we will be so transformed by the Lord that our neighborhoods, our towns and our workplaces will be changed by his abiding presence within us – by our holiness.

This is precisely what the Lord does in the Eucharist. In the coming year, may we, too, "go to any length, suffer any inconvenience, run any risk" to make the Eucharist the center of our lives.

Bishop Peter Sartain
Christ is our Hope
April 2010



Please see the back cover for the official diocesan prayer for the Year of the Eucharist and the Eucharistic Congress.

En la tarde del Jueves Santo, iniciamos un "Año de la Eucaristía" en la Diócesis de Joliet.

Aunque en mi corazón hay muchas razones para hacer esto (y planeo escribir de esto cada mes durante el próximo año), hay una oración que encierra todo:

Yo oro para que durante el Año de la Eucaristía, nosotros los de la Diócesis de Joliet – laicos jóvenes y adultos; hombres y mujeres religiosas; diáconos; presbíteros; y obispos – desarrollemos una apreciación profunda y una hambre por la Eucaristía, que demos a Dios la apertura de renovar y refrescar nuestra diócesis, para hacernos santos.

Podemos estar seguros de que esto es lo que Dios desea para nosotros, porque en la Eucaristía Jesús permanece con nosotros como alimento espiritual (como Él lo dijo "Yo soy el Pan de Vida") y la promesa de su Padre de eterna fidelidad (su "Alianza de Amor"). Todo lo que necesitamos y deseamos en la vida (¡y más!) podemos encontrarlo en el Señor Jesús y en el regalo de la Eucaristía.

¿Se nos olvida, algunas veces, que en Jesús lo tenemos todo? ¿Vamos a buscar satisfacción espiritual en otro lugar sin darnos cuenta que Él está con nosotros, entre nosotros, en la Iglesia, esperándonos a que abramos nuestros corazones para dejarlo entrar? Aun mirándonos nosotros mismos como personas religiosas, ¿algunas veces vemos más allá de Jesús o alrededor de Jesús, olvidando que no necesitamos ver más lejos que a Él mismo? Y si nos vemos como católicos activos, ¿algunas veces tomamos la Eucaristía sin aprecio, como si la Misa en domingo solo fuera una actividad religiosa más dentro de las muchas que hay?

Si vivimos en una casa que está

.....
¿Deseas que el Obispo rece por alguna intención en especial que tú tengas? Escríbele a: Lista de Oraciones del Obispo Sartain. Diocese of Joliet, 425 Summit St. Joliet, IL 60435-7193

llena de tensión, ¿nos preguntamos dónde podemos encontrar paz? Si estamos perdidos y no sabemos a donde voltear, ¿hemos pensado volver a Dios, pero no sabemos cómo hacerlo?

Necesitamos un Año de la Eucaristía para despertar a la verdad que para nosotros los católicos la Eucaristía es absolutamente el centro de nuestras vidas – porque en la Eucaristía Jesús mismo nos alimenta y permanece en nosotros como un compañero en el viaje de la vida. Necesitamos un Año de la Eucaristía para despertar en nosotros, como individuos y como diócesis, un hambre tan profunda por Jesús que nos inspire a amarlo más, a entregar nuestras propias vidas a Él, a confesar nuestras faltas y caídas y aprender a vivir sacrificadamente. Necesitamos un Año de la Eucaristía para que nosotros nunca olvidemos que a través de su Hijo Jesús nuestro Padre celestial nos salva del mal y nos hace santos.

Ustedes niños y niñas en la escuela primaria, ¡Jesús los ama y viene a ustedes en la Santa Eucaristía! Aprendan a participar en la Misa con todo su corazón y reverencia a la presencia santa de Jesús.

Ustedes adolescentes y jóvenes adultos, vean en la Eucaristía al mismo Jesús, su alimento y su guía segura a lo largo de los años de crecimiento y de ideales.

Ustedes parejas de matrimonios, vean en la Eucaristía el mismo pacto sellado con la sangre de Jesús, que es el origen y la fuerza de su matrimonio.

A ustedes que tratan de comprender el plan del Señor para sus vidas, sin importar su edad, déjenle que Él responda desde dentro, haciendo que la Eucaristía sea su inspiración y fuerza.

Ustedes hombres y mujeres religiosas, permitan que su participación en la Misa diaria sea su inspiración en su apostolado y se conviertan en fuente de la presencia de

Por favor, vea en el reverso la oración oficial diocesana para el Año de la Eucaristía y el Congreso Eucarístico.

Jesús para todos aquellos que sirven. Ustedes diáconos, vean en el Señor que lavó los pies a los apóstoles en la primera Eucaristía el símbolo por excelencia de su unión con Jesús el Siervo.

Y, nosotros sacerdotes, ordenados como ministros de la Eucaristía: Que podamos celebrar los sacramentos con tal fervor, fe, cuidado y humildad, que nos maravillamos ante el misterio del mismo Señor, que obra en nosotros, que crezcamos en el temor de lo que Él realiza a través nuestro. Por nuestra diaria celebración de la Misa, que demos más generosamente al Señor y a su pueblo, cuyas vidas Él ha comprado con su propio Cuerpo y Sangre. Si Él los ama así, ¿podemos nosotros amarlos menos?

En su hermoso libro, "He Leadeth Me," Padre Walter Ciszek, S.J., que escribió en sus años de encierro en la Rusia Soviética, dice que él fue privado de la Eucaristía durante muchos meses y al final se esforzó heroicamente para celebrar la Misa en prisión y en los campamentos. Una vez que encontró la forma de decir la Misa secretamente cada día, reconoció que lo hacía no solo para él y para los católicos en el campamento, sino también por el bien espiritual de todas las personas que ni siquiera sabían lo que el estaba haciendo, incluso para los no creyentes. Él escribió: "Me gustaría ir a cualquier lado, sufrir cualquier inconveniencia, correr cualquier peligro para hacer que el Pan de Vida esté disponible."

Necesitamos un Año de la Eucaristía para que seamos transformados por el Señor, para que nuestros vecinos, nuestras ciudades y nuestros lugares de trabajo, puedan ser cambiados por su presencia permanente en nosotros – por nuestra santidad.

Esto es precisamente lo que el Señor hace en la Eucaristía. En el año que viene, que podamos nosotros, también, "ir a cualquier lado, sufrir cualquier inconveniencia, correr cualquier riesgo" para hacer que la Eucaristía sea el centro de nuestras vidas.

Obispo Peter Sartain
Cristo es nuestra Esperanza
abril 2010





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The chalice and host on the logo on the cover is part of a stained-glass window that can be found at the entrance of the chapel at the St. Charles Pastoral Center in Romeoville.



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Most Reverend J. Peter Sartain
PUBLISHER

Doug Delaney
**DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER**

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Carlos Briceño
EDITOR

Amy Kiley
STAFF WRITER

Miguel Moreno
SPANISH TRANSLATOR

Marta Wysocki
POLISH TRANSLATOR

FAITH Catholic

Rev. Dwight Ezop
CHAIRMAN

Patrick M. O'Brien
**PRESIDENT AND CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Elizabeth Martin Solsburg
**DIRECTOR OF CUSTOM PUBLISHING/
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR**

Joanne Eason
DIRECTOR OF CREATIVE SERVICE

Jillane Job
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

Patrick Dally
ART DIRECTOR

Lynne Ridenour
GRAPHIC DESIGNER/WEB MASTER

Janna Stellwag
Abby Wieber
GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Father Bill Ashbaugh
Dcn. Tom and JoAnne Fogle
Father Joseph Krupp
Dr. Cathleen McGreal
Tim Ryan
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Tom Gennara
Phillip Shippert
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

InnerWorkings
PRINT MANAGEMENT

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To submit story ideas and news
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For subscription information
Please call (815) 834-4060

Venerable Pope John Paul II

Editor's note: In honor of the Year of the Eucharist, the magazine will focus this section during the year on saintly men and women of the church who especially loved the Eucharist. The ones chosen for this month were Pope John Paul II and Saint Faustina Kowalska, known for her devotion to Divine Mercy. Pope John Paul II's short biography appears here in English and Polish.

Pope John Paul II was born Karol Wojtyła in Wadowice, Poland, in 1920. He was an intelligent and athletic boy, who loved acting and the theater. The German army invaded Poland in 1939, disrupting his college studies. In 1941 the death of his father (his mother, sister and brother had died years earlier) left Wojtyła without any immediate family when he was just 21 years old. He felt a serious call to the priesthood and soon entered the seminary in Krakow, which was being run secretly because of the German occupation. He was ordained a priest in 1946 and later became an auxiliary bishop, an archbishop and then a cardinal. He participated in the Vatican II Council during the mid 1960s. Then, at the age of 58, after the death of Pope John Paul I in 1978, he was elected pope and chose the name Pope John Paul II. He evangelized widely, traveling to 129 countries during his pontificate and

attracting large crowds along the way. He visited Poland several times when that country was still under the iron fist of communism. He has been credited with helping to bring about the collapse of Soviet rule in Poland.

He was devoted to the Blessed Mother and credits the intervention of Our Lady of Fatima with saving his life during an assassination attempt in 1981. He died in 2005 and has been declared venerable by the church, one of the steps on the road to sainthood.

He had an intense devotion to Eucharistic adoration and once said: "For each of us, the Eucharist is a summons to make an ever greater effort to live as true followers of Christ: truthful in what we say, generous in what we do, caring for and respectful of the dignity and rights of all, whatever their class or their income may be; ready to make personal sacrifices, loyal and just, generous, prudent, compassionate and self-disciplined; aiming at the good of our families, of our young people, of our country, of Europe, of the world. The truth of our union with Christ in the Eucharist is attested by whether or not we truly love our neighbor, whoever that may be, and by the way we treat other people, especially our own families: husbands and wives, children and parents, brothers and sisters. It is attested by the effort we really make to be reconciled with our enemies, to forgive those who wrong us or offend us."



Jan Paweł II

Notatka od redaktora: Ponieważ ten miesiąc rozpoczyna Rok Eucharystii, czasopismo tymczasowo będzie się koncentrowało na świętościach mężczyzn i kobiet w kościele, szczególnie tych, którzy mieli umiłowanie do eucharystii.

Jan Paweł II, (właśc. Karol Wojtyła) – ur. 1920 r. w Wadowicach w Polsce.

Jako chłopiec był bardzo zdolny i wysportowany, kochał sztukę i teatr.

W 1939 r. Karol Wojtyła był zmuszony przerwać studia przez wybuch II Wojny Światowej.

Mając tylko 21 lat w 1941 r., umarł ojciec Karola po długotrwałej chorobie. Jego matka, siostra i brat zmarli lata wcześniej pozostawiając go bez najbliższej rodziny. Jeszcze w trakcie wojny, w roku 1942, Wojtyła rozpoczął studia teologiczne na tajnych wykładach w Krakowie.

Wojtyła przyjął święcenia kapłańskie i został kardynałem w 1946 r.

W latach sześćdziesiątych uczestniczył w Radzie Watykańskiej.

Po śmierci Papieża Jana Pawła I w 1978 r., Karol Wojtyła w wieku 58 został wybrany papieżem, przyjmując imię Jan Paweł II.

Ewangelizował szeroko, podróżując do 129 państw przyciągając wielkie tłumy. Jan Paweł II odwiedził Polskę kilka razy, gdy jeszcze była pod żelazną pięścią komunizmu. Przyczynił się do upadku komunizmu w Polsce.

Ponieważ Jan Paweł II oddał się w opiekę Matki Bożej, zawdzięcza interwencji Naszej Matki Fatimy z ocaleniem jego życia podczas zamachu w 1981 r.

Jan Paweł II odszedł do Domu Ojca w 2005 r. Kościół ogłosił go sługą Bożym. Jest to pierwszym krokiem do świętości.

Jan Paweł II był bardzo oddany adoracji eucharystii. Jan Paweł II kiedyś powiedział: "Dla każdego z nas eucharystia jest wezwaniem, aby dążyć do większego wysiłku by żyć jako prawdziwi zwolennicy Chrystusa: szczerzy w tym co mówimy, hojni w tym co robimy, opiekujący się i troszczący się o wszystkich, jakakolwiek ich klasa lub ich dochód; Gotowy poświęcić się, lojalny i uczciwy, szczodry, rozważny, współczujący i samo zdyscyplinowany; Dążący do dobra naszych rodzin, naszych młodych ludzi, naszego kraju, Europy i świata.

Nasza solidarność z Chrystusem w eucharystii zaświadczy czy naprawdę i słusznie kochamy naszych sąsiadów, ktokolwiek to jest i jak traktujemy innych ludzi, szczególnie nasze własne rodziny: mężowie i żony, dzieci i rodzice, bracia i siostry.

Nasz wysiłek świadczy o tym czy rzeczywiście staramy się być pojednani z naszymi wrogami, aby wybaczyć temu, który nas skrzywdził lub nieprawidłowo obraził.

The Pattern of Life

Father John Welch, O.Carm., is the prior provincial of the Most Pure Heart of Mary Province of the Carmelite order. His office is in Darien, Ill.

Our philosophy professor in the seminary defined life as “One darn thing after another!” On certain days that definition seems apt – but does life have more structure or flow than that? Is there any discernible pattern to our days on earth?

At times we experience life as a placid stream; at other times it is a whirlpool. Developmental psychologists speak of seasons and transitions. They say there are predictable patterns. As we shift from one phase of life to another, we may experience upheaval, confusion, a loss of direction. But then, life settles down again for a while.

As we mature our poor egos have to weather and adapt to periodic storms. One prominent psychologist claimed there is no growth in consciousness without pain. Letting go of one life structure, as another season of life comes on line, is a painful process. Something is always lost when new life emerges.

Saints and seasons

The saints also noticed life's pattern of loss and growth. In their struggles they spoke of climbing a mountain, crossing a desert or finding their ways to a center point. The saints speak of life as a pilgrimage of faith, with recurring invitations to conversion. In conversion the Christian is learning to turn his or her life over to God in trust.

The psychologist charts the psyche's growth into consciousness. The Christian understands this process as grace-enabled, allowing the Christian to hear God's invitation into life. The psychologist names flesh-and-blood issues encountered in human development. The Christian understands

these issues, as painful as they may be, as occasions for opening our lives to God's merciful love.

Sometimes the saints boldly speak about “becoming God.” Of course, they always remain creatures, but their union with God is so intimate that they can no longer tell who is acting in their life, they or the Holy Spirit. Combining the psychologist and the saint, we could say the goal of human development is, ultimately, divinization, a growing participation in the knowing and loving of God.

The Paschal Mystery

A fundamental pattern of life Jesus offered us is his death and resurrection, which is referred to as the Paschal Mystery. Just getting through the day is often a cross. Staying true to one's humanity as it unfolds involves repeatedly letting go. But, Jesus also promised the resurrection, not avoiding the cross, but *through* the cross.

Italian nuns who worked in our seminary kitchens would say, “No sacrifice, no paradise!” That dimmed our hopes for the next meal!

In other words the dying and rising of Christ, the Paschal Mystery, is inbuilt in human development. Being faithful to life as it comes to us, and faithful to our growth as human beings, involves death and

resurrection. And, in this process, we are responding to God, who calls us more deeply into our lives. Good Friday and Easter Sunday, cross and resurrection, become the rhythm of our days. For a Christian, the Paschal Mystery is *the* pattern of life. ☪



Ask the priests: Are there good reasons for thinking Jesus truly rose from the dead?

Father Ryan Larson is a parochial vicar at Saints Peter and Paul Parish in Naperville. **Father Matthew Pratscher** is the parochial vicar at Visitation Parish in Elmhurst. To submit questions to Father Ryan or Father Matt, e-mail them at magazine@dioceseofjoliet.org.

Q Are there good reasons for thinking that Jesus truly rose from the dead and that this claim was not just invented by the early church?

A As we think about this, it's important to note that a large number of the first Christians, including many of the apostles and biblical authors, were persecuted, imprisoned and even killed for their faith. People would not be willing to face these things for something they knew was a lie. If the claim that Christ had risen from the dead had been invented for the sake of some sort of personal gain, these individuals would have confessed that when they faced persecution and death as a result of making that claim.

However, we still have to deal with the possibility that the first Christians sincerely believed Jesus had risen from the dead, but that they were somehow delusional when they made this claim. For this to be true it would seem to be necessary to say the accounts we have regarding Christ's resurrec-

tion are based on hallucinations that came about as a result of the deep grief the Christians felt as they faced the death of Jesus. As we consider this possibility, it is important to remember how many people claimed to have seen the risen Jesus. The New Testament tells us about the risen Lord appearing on multiple occasions, in different locations, to a sizable number of people. (Some of the references include Matthew 28:16-20; Luke 24:13-49; John 20:14-29 and John 21:1-23.)

Hallucinations just don't work that way. It is much more plausible to believe these people actually saw what they claimed to have seen than to believe so many people on so many different occasions had the same hallucination.

Once we see it is extraordinarily unlikely that the biblical accounts of Christ's resurrection are the product of deception or delusion, we are left with the realization that, no matter how incredible the claim is that Jesus rose from the dead is, it is the acceptance of the truth of this claim that best explains the origins and beliefs of the early church. For a sense of the deep conviction with which Saint Paul preached the resurrection of Christ, read: 1 Corinthians 15:1-58. — **Father Ryan Larson**



Q: Why is Easter not on the same date every year?

A: Easter is what we call a moveable feast; it is not fixed. It is based on a lunisolar cycle, falling on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox (the Spring equinox), which can be March 19, 20, or 21, but the church has fixed it by convention at March 21. Easter is moveable because of its relation to the Feast of Passover. Our computation puts Easter usually within a week of the first day of Passover, but, because of the divergences in the calculation of a lunar month, the two feasts can, at times, move to be as far as a month away from each other.

Disputes over when to celebrate Easter go back as far as the second, third and fourth centuries. It was often celebrated in conjunction with the Passover, the 14th day of Nisan (from the Hebrew calendar). Some would celebrate Easter on the Feast of the Passover, and others would celebrate it on the following Sunday, the Sunday of Unleavened Bread.

Because of the use of different calendars and the challenge of communication, the Jews' calculation of the Passover at times differed from one region to another. In an effort to celebrate Easter as one unified Christian people in the Empire and to give the church more of an autonomous calendar, the church

established its own method of establishing the date of Easter.

Western Christianity uses the Gregorian calendar, which is the internationally accepted civil calendar. It was introduced by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. The Gregorian calendar is a reform of the Julian calendar, which is still used by Eastern Christians. The Eastern Orthodox Church also uses March 21 as the starting point for computing Easter, but that date in the Julian calendar actually corresponds to April 3 in the Gregorian calendar. Unfortunately, Christianity is divided in its celebration of Easter. This year, however, Easter falls on the same date for both the East and the West.

— **Father Matt Pratscher**



Christ's sacrifice: Cross and Communion

Father Douglas Martis is the director of the Liturgical Institute at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake in Mundelein (liturgicalinstitute.com) and a priest of the Diocese of Joliet. He has been examining various aspects of the liturgy as part of the preparations for the Year of the Eucharist, which starts this month. His podcasts on the liturgy can be heard at mbrmv.org/mbrmv.rss.

Every Mass begins in the Bible. The principal biblical narrative that lies behind the Mass is the story of the Paschal Mystery: the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord. This is the sacrifice par excellence. It is a unique story in all of human history. For, as often as sacrifices are depicted, there always seems to be a way out. God asked Abraham to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice. But, of course, we know God stopped the knife: he rescued Isaac. God rescued Noah and Joseph and Daniel; God rescued Israel.

Sacrifice is easier to stomach if we know it won't end in any real, negative consequences. So, perhaps it has crept into our religious memory that God demands sacrifice – but doesn't ever really expect it.

Until Jesus.

He did not escape; the story of Christ has no loophole. Grace is free, but it does not come cheap. Our faith does not recall Christ as some superhero dangling by a thread only to be saved after a commercial break. We do not tell a story about a savior who, dreaming of transfiguration on Tabor, cheerfully carries his cross along Calvary, numb to the anguish of the Mount of Olives, secretly knowing it's not going to hurt. He is not like a soldier who marches to the threshold of extinction only to have God snatch him away, rescued before he falls into oblivion.

Christ dies.

We think on that! We meditate on that! We linger over that! The story has true suffering, real pain, authentic agony, innocent blood shed – and, oh, what precious blood it is! This is the profound mystery of our faith: Christ, the innocent one who had no debt to repay, no need to die, takes on himself our own condemnation. He does so to rescue us from our hopeless fate. He does for us what we are not able to do for ourselves.

We tell these stories over and again to remind ourselves God is able to save us. We recall a God who created us out of love, who gave us a vast and beautiful world and gifts of intelligence and freedom so we could recognize and truly appreciate what we have received. The story of creation drives home the point: “God saw how good it was.” The Book of Genesis repeats this no fewer than six times. And, just in case we had missed it, the first chapter concludes with, “God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good.”

With all the beauty in creation, with a world as perfect as human beings could hope for, one wonders what went wrong. Call it pride; call it lust; call it a desire for independence. Whatever the explanation, as Saint Paul says, “Sin entered the world and through sin, death” (*Romans 5:12*). The need for salvation was born. God tried repeatedly to bring us back. The prophets called for conversion, covenants were made and broken and still the human response was mediocre. The offer is made again to us.

We tell ourselves we can do better. We believe God and trust in his love for us. We witness again the saving events of the past to stir into flame the smoldering embers – to reignite the hope God will demonstrate his power to save even us, even now. And, once our salvation is assured, once it is recognized, we have but to live in thanksgiving for what God has done for us in Christ.

What we say matters. The church says what she

believes when she prays, means what she says. A beautiful phrase in a marriage exhortation says, “Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy, and perfect love can make it a joy.” It then recalls the passage from Saint John: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only son.” In this way it connects the passion of Christ with the example of conjugal love. It is the example Christians follow because they pattern their lives on the model of their Lord.

The tradition of the early church tells us, with the exception of beloved John, all of the apostles were martyred. None was rescued miraculously before dying. You see, from Christ's victory over sin and death until now, rescue from death is no longer God's way of reacting. From the time of Jesus on the cross even until now, death no longer means the end; it means passage. It is the way to new and fuller life – the way to real life. Death, in the light of Christ, now means return to God.

The sacred liturgy celebrates all of this. It recalls the story, nourishes our conviction and puts our faith into concrete form.

In the Old Testament, the altar marks the spot of sublime encounter with God. It also denotes a decisive change in relationship. For Catholics, in the structure of the church, the altar is central. Everything turns on this point. The altar is the *axis mundi*, the center of the world. For those seized by the mystery of Christ, everything revolves around him. This table cannot represent only meal: we can eat and drink anywhere. This table represents the sacrifice, the gift that makes it possible for us to be joined as brothers and sisters. The sacrifice of the altar enables us to be reconciled because it is there Christ gives himself as our nourishment, as our life!

In the ritual of the church, the altar is treated with unique, even tender, care. In the dedication of a church, the altar is sprinkled, anointed, dressed. Like the elect at baptism, it is washed with holy water (that carries with it every story of salvation – from the creation of the world to the water and blood flowing from the side of a crucified Lord). The altar is anointed with the sacred chrism oil – making it “another Christ.” It is clothed, like the newly baptized, to show that it, too, is a new creation – no longer a mundane block of stone, but now a privileged place, and more: we say Christ the priest, the victim, is himself the altar of sacrifice.

Here the most remarkable event occurs: here the place of sacrifice, here decisive relationship, here old wounds healed. As the priest approaches the altar, he invites the faithful to join their sacrifice to Christ's. “Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.” Once the sacrifice has been made, consummation and communion follow. You see? When love is perfect, the sacrifice is complete. ☪

The Eucharistic Theology of St. John's Gospel (part four): Manna from Heaven

Father Robert Schoenstene is a priest of the Diocese of Joliet, ordained in 1975. He did his seminary studies at the Pontifical College Josephinum in Columbus, Ohio. Following ordination he did graduate studies in classics at Loyola University and biblical studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome from 1978 to 1981. He taught Scripture at the Pontifical College Josephinum from 1981 to 1988 and at the University of St. Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary from 1988 to the present. He helps on weekends at Christ the King Parish in Lombard. This is the fourth part of his series on the Eucharist in honor of this year's diocesan Year of the Eucharist, which begins this month.



Dieric Bouts the Elder's painting *The Gathering of the Manna*

In this installment we will begin examining the major source of Eucharistic theology in this Gospel, the discourse on the Bread of Life in chapter six. This discourse runs from verses 25-71. Using irony, Saint John ties this chapter to those of the Last Supper narrative with the inclusion of a mention of Judas in verses 70-71: "Jesus answered them, 'Did I not choose you twelve? Yet is not one of you a devil?' He was referring to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot; it was he who would betray him, one of the Twelve."

The discourse on the Bread of Life begins the day after the multiplication of the loaves and the walking on the water. These will be the signs to which Jesus will refer in the discourse. The crowd is described as following Jesus across the water in boats.

In the Book of Exodus, the Hebrews cross the waters, escaping from the Egyptians, and then enter the wilderness. In the wilderness they are thirsty and come to a place, Marah (meaning "bitter"), where the water is undrinkable. Moses tosses a tree into the water, and the water becomes fresh (Exodus 15:24-25). There is a deep symbolism present in this passage; the verb *to throw, yarah* in Hebrew, is the root from which the word *Torah, Instruction*, is derived. Torah, the Lord's will for Israel, is described in Proverbs as a Tree of Life (Proverbs 3:18). The tree in Exodus is a prefiguring of the giving of the Ten Commandments, the basic Torah, on Mount Sinai. The giving of the Torah in the form of the Ten Commandments is found in chapters 19 and 20 of Exodus.

Following the sweetening of the waters, the crowd again complains to Moses and Aaron because they are hungry: "The Israelites said to them, 'Would that we had died at the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, as we sat by our fleshpots and ate our fill of bread! But you had to lead us into this desert to make the whole community die of famine!'" (Exodus 16:3).

God's response to the murmuring is to feed them. The giving of food, quails and manna is a revelation of the glory of the Lord (Exodus 16:7). In the giving of

manna, the Sabbath day (which has not yet been commanded; it will be in Exodus 20:8-11) is also prefigured. The Hebrews are told to gather a double portion of manna on the sixth day in order to have enough for the seventh, when they are not to gather any. The Sabbath is the gift of rest and will become a sacred tradition in Israel. They will come to know God on the Sabbath when they rest in Him. (The Sabbath texts are in Exodus 16:22-30.)

The name manna is given to the food out of a question: "In the morning a dew lay all about the camp, and when the dew evaporated, there on the surface of the ground were fine flakes like hoarfrost on the ground. On seeing it, the Hebrews asked one another 'What is this?' for they did not know what it was. But Moses told them, 'This is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat'" (Exodus 16:14-15).

The manna is described in Exodus as *lechem*, which can mean either specifically *bread* or *food* in general. It is described as coming from dew. In the ancient world, dew was believed to have descended from the sky. In Genesis, in the blessing that Jacob received from Isaac, dew is described as a source of fertility: "Ah, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field that the Lord has blessed! May God give to you of the dew of the heavens and of the fertility of the earth abundance of grain and wine" (Genesis 27:27-28). In Deuteronomy the blessing of Moses on the 12 tribes contains mention of dew: "Israel has dwelt securely and the fountain of Jacob

has been undisturbed in a land of grain and wine, where the heavens drip with dew" (Deuteronomy 33:28). Manna would then have been understood as the food that came from heaven.

In the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, the crowd is described as having followed Jesus from Tiberias. John makes a specific remark about the multiplication of the loaves that will be important in understanding what the discourse on the Bread of Life will be about: "Other boats came from Tiberias near the place where they had eaten the bread when the Lord gave thanks" (John 6:23). Throughout chapter six the image of manna from the Old Testament will be important in understanding what Jesus is saying of himself and connections to the Last Supper and Christian Eucharist. Manna will be found, particularly here in the use of the phrase *eucharistesantos tou kuriou*, when the Lord has given thanks.

In John 6:27 Jesus distinguishes the bread they had eaten, the multiplied loaves, from the Bread that will not perish, the Bread of Life. The crowd has followed Jesus because he fed them, but he wants them to look for something deeper than alleviating physical hunger. As the ancient Israelites received manna on their way to the Promised Land, the followers of Jesus will receive a food that will give more than physical sustenance on their way of following Jesus, who speaks of himself at the Last Supper as "the way, the truth and the life" (John 14:6).

Jesus makes the connection to manna clear in John 6:32-40. Like manna, he has come down from heaven; unlike manna, he gives eternal life. Moses did not save the Israelites; God did. It is God who has sent Jesus into the world, like the dew that produced manna, to be the Bread of Life for humanity: "For the bread of God is that which comes down from the heavens and gives life to the world" (John 6:33).

THE YEAR OF THE EUCHARIST BEGINS

Initiated by Bishop Peter Sartain, the Year of the Eucharist begins this month across the Diocese of Joliet, culminating in a Eucharistic Congress in June 2011. He hopes the year brings about the spiritual renewal in the diocese through the Eucharist and all liturgical life; fosters an appreciation for the Sacrament of Penance; prepares for and implements the revision of the *Roman Missal*, the official guide to the celebration of the Mass, by placing the revision in its proper theological, spiritual and pastoral context; encourages participation in the worldwide "Year for Priests," which ends in June 2010; and involves reaching out to Catholics who have distanced themselves from the church and welcoming them home. Throughout the year, *Christ is our Hope* will be including articles, such as the ones over the next several pages, to help inform our readers about the Eucharist and the various events associated with the year.





Understanding the Eucharist (Part 1)

Father Jeremy Driscoll, O.S.B., is a monk and priest from Mount Angel Abbey in Oregon. He teaches theology both at Mount Angel Seminary and at the Benedictine University in Rome, Sant'Anselmo. He is a well-known theologian and poet, and he lectures both in this country and in Italy. He is also a consultor in liturgy for the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship. As part of *Christ is our Hope's* coverage of the diocesan Year of the Eucharist, which begins this month, Father Driscoll has answered questions about the Eucharist for a two-part series. The first installment is below.

How did you view the Eucharist as you were growing up? Your question makes me think immediately of my first Communion. I was well-prepared for this by the Ursuline nun who was my second-grade teacher. I suppose I was 6 or 7 years old. Mother Celine was my teacher's name. She instilled a wonderful sense of reverence and anticipation in all of us. As I try to remember what might have been the essence of her teaching, I think I would say there was a very clear sense of being united with Jesus by means of the Eucharist. He was coming to us in this sacra-

ment, and we had a responsibility (and a desire!) to receive him well, to be ready for him.

At what point did you start to develop a deeper understanding of the Eucharist in your heart and why? I don't remember an exact point of starting to understand more deeply. I think perhaps my understanding kept pace with my growing up. As I said my first Communion made a strong impression on me. Sunday Mass, and even daily Mass during the school year, was a regular part of my life, and I always loved to

attend and to receive Communion. There was a great sense of mystery in the whole of the Mass, and communion coming toward the end was experienced as a sort of climax. I think I began to wonder what the rest of it had to do with this climax. I received really good instruction about Mass in a Catholic high school, and so the things I wondered about began to receive answers and to generate further questions. I had a growing sense of the importance of the Scripture readings and then especially of the Eucharistic Prayer, when the bread and wine are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ. I kept hearing the word "sacrifice" connected with Mass and with Jesus' death on the cross. These seemed huge ideas, somehow beyond me, but I always wanted to be near them anyway.

How does a deeper understanding of the Mass help a Catholic?

I'll answer this no longer remembering my childhood and teen years but speaking now as an adult, an adult who, in fact, has staked everything on the importance of Mass. I grew up and became a monk, a priest and a theologian, so you might imagine that I have a lot to say on a question like this. But, I'll try to come to the heart of the matter.

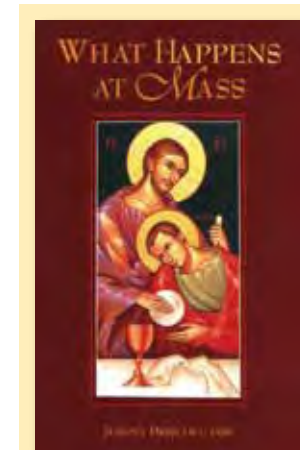
Mass is the most important thing we have as Catholics. It is the center of our Catholic faith and life. Everything flows from the Mass. That is why, after many years as a priest, I felt a strong urge to write a book that I called "What Happens at Mass." In it I tried to explain some of what I had come to understand through the years. As I mentioned I'm a theologian, and, in addition to teaching theology, I also write about it for other theologians who are professionally trained. But, in "What Happens at Mass," I wanted to write a book for non-professional theologians, for any Catholic that wanted to understand the Mass more deeply. The book is written on the principle that one shouldn't have to be a professional theologian to understand the Mass deeply. Mass belongs to the whole church and is vital for everyone in it, at every age and in every walk of life. Yes, you have to make an effort to understand things more deeply, but you don't have to be a theologian. This also means that we shouldn't make excuses for not deepening our understanding, saying something like, "Well, after all, I'm not a theologian." No, in the Mass, God has given us something that we can all understand if we make the effort. In a sense the Mass itself teaches us what the Mass

is, but we need some clues, some key ideas, so that we can lock into this sense and then let our regular celebration of it result in an ever deeper understanding.

What are some of the practical ways that Catholics – especially those who may not go to Mass often – might start to deepen their love for the Eucharist? Will you pardon me if I refer to my book once again? After all, it is my best effort to answer questions like you're asking. I make a lot of the title of that book, which, at first, can seem almost banal. But, in fact, the most practical way to deepen our love for the Eucharist is to realize that something absolutely enormous actually happens at Mass. God is acting! He acts to save us. It is a huge event. In fact, there is nothing bigger. God has concentrated the entirety of his saving love for the world into the ritual action and words of the Eucharistic liturgy. And so, practically, we want to grow in our understanding of what the ritual action means and accomplishes, what the words mean and accomplish. This is where some effort is needed, but it's enough to learn a little at a time and then go back to Mass with that new little insight and let the Mass itself teach the rest.

Something that can be useful is to realize that there are different parts of the Mass, each of which has its own sense. They are all related and follow naturally one upon the other, but it's useful to learn how to discern these different parts and to notice the shift from one to the other, the movement of the whole. Otherwise the Mass can be experienced just as a kind of undifferentiated blur from start to finish. It becomes exciting – or at least interesting – to know that God's acting in the Mass to save us unfolds in four major parts. The first part is God's action through the reading of the Scriptures. The second part is our bringing gifts of bread and wine to the hands of the priest. The third part is the Eucharistic prayer in which these gifts of

bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ and offered by the whole church to God the Father. The fourth part is our communion in these gifts, our receiving the Body and Blood of Christ. And, we become what we receive! This is enormous. This is tremendous. There will always be more to learn about each of these four parts and their relations to each other, but we can already deepen our understanding a lot by just noticing these parts as the Mass is celebrated. ☺



Father Driscoll's book, "What Happens at Mass" (ISBN 978-1568545639), is available at Amazon.com.

Why we shouldn't be afraid of Eucharistic adoration

Father Robert Barron is a priest in the Archdiocese of Chicago. His website is wordonfire.org.

In September of 2009, Notre Dame Theologian Father Richard McBrien delivered a sharp critique of the practice of Eucharistic adoration, the resurgence of which he bitterly lamented. He wrote, "It is difficult to speak favorably about the devotion today." His principal argument against Eucharistic adoration was that the practice is grounded in naïve and questionable theology that would divorce the Eucharist from its proper context within the liturgy. Though adoration might have been understandable in a more primitive time, "Now that Catholics are literate and even well-educated, the Mass is in the language of the people ... and its rituals relatively easy to understand and follow, there is little or no need for extraneous Eucharistic devotions." Father McBrien concluded: "Eucharistic adoration ... is a doctrinal, theological and spiritual step backward." In short, those who bother to adore the Blessed Sacrament are not that bright.

In the 1940s and 1950s, whenever he was home in Paris, a slight, mustachioed man would make his way nightly through the Montmartre neighborhood,

heading for the church of Sacre Coeur. Once in his pew, he would kneel down and participate in the all-night adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The man's name was

Jacques Maritain, and he was one of the most significant Catholic philosophers of the 20th century.

During the 1920s a young German woman, who was an instructor at a teacher training college, would come regularly to the Dominican church and sit down in a chair situated directly in front of the tabernacle. There she would spend hours in silent adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. So intense was her devotion that the nuns with whom she lived would stare in wonder at her. This young woman's name was Edith Stein, and she was one of the most important Catholic thinkers of the last century.

Karol Wojtyla received his doctorate in 1946, having completed a study of the phenomenological ethics of Max Scheler. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, he was professor of moral philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin and produced a number of sophisticated studies of Christian ethics. During the 1970s he became Cardinal Wojtyla and lectured at universities around the world. In 1978 he was elected pope. Practically every morning when he was in Rome, Pope John



Paul II would kneel before the Blessed Sacrament as a preparation for his daily Mass. Those who prayed with him witnessed to the extraordinary intensity of his devotion, visible in his face and his body.

These examples of extremely smart, theologically "plugged in" adorers of the Eucharist could be multiplied endlessly: Thomas

somehow detracts or distracts from the central prayer of the Mass, though it has been repeated endlessly in the post-conciliar period, is nonsense.

In a penetrating essay from the 1950s, Karl Rahner, one of the most significant Catholic theologians of the last century, argued that the Eucharist is always a "word event." Christ becomes

really present through the pronouncing of the words "this is my body" and "this is my blood" by the priest at Mass. The Council of Trent, Rahner reminds us, conveyed that Christ is present *vi verborum* (by the power of words). The conclusion that Rahner draws is that Jesus, even when he is present in the quiet of the tabernacle, is present "verbally," which is to say in reference to the consecratory words of the Eucharistic liturgy. Accordingly, the Christ sacramentally present in the tabernacle or the monstrance comes from the Mass and points back toward the Mass. The "tension" between the liturgy and the tabernacle, insisted on by far too many post-conciliar theologians, is phony, and this is borne out by the fact that those who love the Eucharistic Lord in the Blessed Sacrament are usually those who are most devoted to the Mass.

Therefore, I applaud the revival of eucharistic adoration in many parishes and dioceses, precisely because I accept Vatican II's call to consider the liturgy "the source and summit of the Christian life." ☪

Year of the Eucharist Pilgrimage Churches

The following parishes have been selected as diocesan pilgrimage churches in honor of the Year of the Eucharist. They are places to go to pray, especially during times of Eucharistic adoration. That is when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and people can adore Christ, who is truly present – body, blood, soul and divinity – under the appearance of the consecrated Eucharistic host. The host usually rests in a vessel called a monstrance, which is placed on the altar during adoration. Perpetual adoration takes place 24 hours a day, except when Mass is celebrated in the adoration space. The times listed here also include times the churches or chapels are open to the public.

Ashkum – Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, 208 N. Second St., perpetual adoration in the church seven days a week; after dark knock on church door for admittance.

Beaverville – Saint Mary Parish, 67308 St. Charles St., adoration on first Fridays, 3-4 p.m. The parish is open most days from sunrise to sunset, but please call (815) 435-2432 before a visit to be certain.

Braidwood – Immaculate Conception Parish, 110 S.

School St., adoration chapel, in the parish hall, open daily from 6 a.m.-6 p.m.

Carol Stream – Corpus Christi Parish, 1415 W. Lies Rd., adoration in the church on first Fridays, 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

Coal City – Assumption Parish, 245 S. Kankakee St., perpetual adoration in chapel attached to and south of rectory, open from 6 a.m.-10 p.m., daily.

Darien – National Shrine of the Little Flower, 1313 Frontage Rd., shrine open daily, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. Organized group pilgrimage programs are available.

Downers Grove – Saint Mary of Gostyn Parish, 444 Wilson St., perpetual adoration in chapel.

Elmhurst – Visitation Parish, 779 S. York St., perpetual adoration in chapel in convent building. Keycard required from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m.

Frankfort – Saint Anthony Parish, 7659 W. Sauk Trail, perpetual adoration chapel in church building.

Gilman – Immaculate Conception/ Our Lady of Guadalupe, 224 N. Wood St., perpetual adoration in chapel.

Hinsdale – Saint Isaac Jogues Parish, 306 W. Fourth St., perpetual adoration in chapel located behind church.

Joliet – Cathedral of Saint Raymond, 604 N. Raynor Ave.; Cathedral open Monday through Fridays, 6:30 a.m.-2 p.m.; Saturdays, 7:30 a.m.-6 p.m.; Sundays, 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m. **Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish**, 205 E. Jackson St. (church), 405 Irving St. (original chapel). Call (815) 727-7187 before visiting. Church open during Mass only; chapel open Thursday afternoons. **Saint Jude Parish**, 2212 McDonough St., adoration daily in the church from 5 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sundays, 2-10 p.m. **Saint Mary Nativity Parish**, 706 N. Broadway St., daily adoration in the church from 6 a.m.-9 p.m.

Kankakee – Saint Patrick Parish, 428 S. Indiana Ave., church open Mondays through Saturdays, 8 a.m.-noon; Sundays, 7-11 a.m. Adoration occurs in the church on Thursdays, noon – 7 p.m.

Lisle – Saint Joan of Arc Parish, 820 Division St., perpetual adoration chapel in parish office building.

Lombard – Divine Mercy Polish Mission, 21 W. 411 Sunset Ave., exposition on Fridays following 9 a.m. Mass until 7 p.m. **Sacred Heart Parish**, 114 S. Elizabeth St., perpetual adoration in chapel.

Naperville – Saint Elizabeth Seton Parish, 2220 Lisson Road. Perpetual adoration chapel is open to public, 7 a.m. – 7 p.m. every day. **Saints Peter and Paul Parish**, 36 N. Ellsworth St. perpetual adoration chapel in St. Paul Center, 5 North Brainard.

Plainfield – Saint Mary Immaculate Parish, 129 S. Division St. (Route 59), perpetual adoration chapel in north wing of church building.

Saint Anne – Saint Anne Parish, 230 N. Sixth Ave. The church is open daily, but call first (815) 427-8265 for hours. Tours are welcome with prior notice.

Westmont – Holy Trinity Parish, 111 S. Cass Ave., perpetual adoration in chapel, enter off Richmond St., open 5 a.m. -10 p.m. daily.



Easter reflections of hope and joy

The Easter vigil celebration is the beginning of the Easter season and lasts for 50 days, from Easter Sunday until Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost, commonly referred to as the birthday of the church, celebrates the sending of the Holy Spirit to the apostles. The Easter season is known as a time of joy, grace and thanksgiving, celebrating Christ's resurrection. What follows are some reflections by church leaders on the meaning of the season and of Christ's resurrection.

Today, Easter Sunday, is the greatest feast of the year. If Christ is not risen, our faith is dead, said Saint Paul. So, it is no wonder that, all over the world, countless millions of Christians will be expressing their faith with prayers and shouts of joy and jubilation. They will be saying, "Jesus is Lord. Christ is risen. Alleluia." It is in the affirmation of that extraordinary fact that we find our meaning and our hope and the purpose of our lives. You see, the first meaning of Easter is that this extraordinary person, Jesus of Nazareth, who was nailed into timber, hammered into the ground, buried under stone, put death to flight and rose to new life. He overcame death and is risen to new life with God His Father. Jesus is Lord. But, the resurrection of Jesus is not just an historical fact. It is a continuing experience. We do not say, "Christ rose." We say, "Christ is risen." And that he lives through his Holy Spirit, through his word which is spoken to us, through the Holy Eucharist that we celebrate, the Holy Communion that we receive, in the sacraments, in other people. Christ is alive. Christ is risen.

— **Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, former President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.**

Easter is a time of joy — a joy not confined to this period of the liturgical year, but to be found really and fully in the Christian's heart. For Christ is alive. He is not

someone who has gone, someone who existed for a time and then passed on, leaving us a wonderful example and a great memory. No, Christ is alive. Jesus is the Emmanuel: God with us. His resurrection shows us that God does not abandon his own. He promised he would not: "Can a woman forget her baby that is still unweaned — pity no longer the son she bore in her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." And, he has kept his promise.

— **Saint Josemaria Escriva**

This is the joy of the Easter Vigil: we are free. In the resurrection of Jesus, love has been shown to be stronger than death, stronger than evil. Love made Christ descend, and love is also the power by which he ascends. The power by which he brings us with him. In union with his love, borne aloft on the wings of love, as persons of love, let us descend with him into the world's darkness, knowing that in this way we will also rise up with him. On this night, then, let us pray: Lord, show us that love is stronger than hatred, that love is stronger than death. Descend into the darkness and the abyss of our modern age, and take by the hand those who await you. Bring them to the light! In my own dark nights, be with me to bring me forth! Help me, help all of us, to descend with you into the darkness of all those people who are still waiting for you, who, out of the depths cry, unto you!

Help us to bring them your light! Help us to say the "yes" of love, the love that makes us descend with you and, in so doing, also to rise with you. Amen.

— **Pope Benedict XVI**

The Lord is risen indeed ... Christ's body did not remain in the tomb, but raised to new life, and ... our own bodies will join him in glory. ... It is a great and powerful mystery. ... The body is not a prison to escape from, but a temple in which God's glory already dwells, and in which God's glory will be fully manifested on the day of the resurrection. ... Easter season is a time of hope. There is still fear; there is still a painful awareness of sinfulness, but there also is light breaking through. ... We can be joyful or sad, optimistic or pessimistic, tranquil or angry, but the solid stream of God's presence moves deeper than the small waves of our minds and our hearts. Easter brings the awareness that God is present even when his presence is not directly noticed. Easter brings the good news that, although things seem to get worse in the world, the evil one has already been overcome. Easter allows us to affirm that, although God seems very distant and although we remain preoccupied with many little things, our Lord walks with us on the road and keeps explaining the Scriptures to us. Thus, there are many rays of hope casting

their rays on our life through life.

— **Father Henri Nouwen, Catholic author**

Because there are these two periods of time — the one that now is, beset with the trials and troubles of this life, and the other yet to come, a life of everlasting serenity and joy — we are given two liturgical seasons, one before Easter and the other after. The season before Easter signifies the troubles in which we live here and now, while the time after Easter, which we are celebrating at present, signifies the happiness that will be ours in the future. What we commemorate before Easter is what we experience in this life; what we celebrate after Easter points to something we do not yet possess. This is why we keep the first season with fasting and prayer, but now the fast is over and we devote the present season to praise. Such is the meaning of the Alleluia we sing.

Both these periods are represented and demonstrated for us in Christ our head. The Lord's passion depicts for us our present life of trial — shows how we must suffer and be afflicted and finally die. The Lord's resurrection and glorification show us the life that will be given to us in the future.

Now, therefore, brethren, we urge you to praise God. That is what we are all telling each other when we say Alleluia. You say to your neighbor, "Praise the Lord!" and he says the same to you. We

are all urging one another to praise the Lord, and all, thereby, doing what each of us urges the other to do. But, see that your praise comes from your whole being; in other words, see that you praise God not with your lips and voices alone, but with your minds, your lives and all your actions.

We are praising God now, assembled as we are here in church; but, when we go on our various ways again, it seems as if we cease to praise God. But, provided we do not cease to live a good life, we shall always be praising God. You cease to praise God only when you swerve from justice and from what is pleasing to God. If you never turn aside from the good life, your tongue may be silent but your actions will cry aloud, and God will perceive your intentions, for, as our ears hear each other's voices, so do God's ears hear our thoughts.

— **Saint Augustine**

The Easter gift of light that scatters the darkness of fear and sadness is meant for everyone; all are offered the gift of the peace of the Risen Christ, who breaks the chains of violence and hatred. We now re-discover with joy and wonder that the world is no longer a slave to the inevitable. This world of ours can change: peace is possible even where for too long there has been fighting and death. Men and women of every continent, draw from his tomb, empty now forever, the strength needed to defeat the powers of evil and death

and to place all research and all technical and social progress at the service of a better future for all. From the moment when your tomb, O Christ, was found empty and Cephas, the disciples, the women, and "more than five hundred brethren" saw you risen, there began the time in which the whole of creation sings your name, "which is above every other name," and awaits your final return in glory. During this time, between Easter and the coming of your everlasting kingdom, a time like the travail of giving birth, sustain us in our dedication to building a more humane world, a world soothed by the balm of your love.

— **Pope John Paul II**

There are men — we see this in the phenomenon of suicide bombers — who die for a misguided or even evil cause, mistakenly retaining, but in good faith, that the cause is a worthy one. Even Christ's death does not testify to the truth of his cause, but only the fact that he believed in its truth. Christ's death is the supreme witness of his charity, but not of his truth. This truth is adequately testified to only by the resurrection. "The faith of Christians," says Saint Augustine, "is the resurrection of Christ. It is no great thing to believe that Jesus died; even the pagans believe this, everyone believes it. The truly great thing is to believe that he is risen."

— **Capuchin Father Raniero Cantalamessa, pontifical household preacher**

Lessons from the road to Emmaus

Basilian Father Thomas Rosica, chief executive officer of the Salt and Light Catholic Media Foundation and Television Network (saltandlighttv.org in Canada), was ordained to the priesthood in 1986. He is a weekly contributor to the Zenit International News Service (zenit.org) and serves as a consultant to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications. He can be reached at rosica@saltandlighttv.org.

The Gospel readings of the Easter season are filled with powerful encounters and images of hope and new life. Those appearances of Jesus and encounters with his apostles and disciples are what the resurrection is all about, and the experiences of those first Easter witnesses can teach us much about what it means to be a disciple, a witness and a leader today.

Let us consider first the lessons learned from the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. This beloved Gospel story from St. Luke (24:13-35) is a very human story, full of pathos – stylized in pattern, suggesting a Eucharistic celebration. The disciples come with their questions and doubts; the Scriptures are recited; words of clarification and instruction are exchanged on the road; and, finally, the moment of recognition comes in the context of a meal. The narrative concludes with the disciples' return to the community in Jerusalem, only to find that the good news of the resurrection has already been made known to those who patiently waited for Jesus in the Holy City.

Jesus approaches the disciples in their blindness on the road and leads them to sight. As soon as they recognize him after the bread is broken, he disappears from their midst. They are both able to look back over the past few hours and see how Jesus slowly brought them back to faith and helped them discover the meaning of the Messiah's suffering, death and resurrection.

opened at table in Emmaus. The good news descended from their heads to their hearts, and they experienced that strange and wonderful feeling of their hearts gradually being set on fire. They found new meaning in the breaking open of the Scriptures and the sharing of bread. Such a discovery produced a desire in them to return to the assembled community in Jerusalem and to share with those who waited there the good news of the resurrection.

The journey motif of this passage is not only a matter of the distance between Jerusalem and Emmaus, but also of the painful and gradual journey of words that must descend from the head to the heart – of a coming to faith, of a return to a proper relationship with the stranger who is none other than Jesus the Lord. The evangelist Luke's picture of the dejected disciples can help us to recognize how difficult the struggle is for the world and for each of us to yield to God's purposes. Jesus' disciples are unable to understand that he must suffer, and this failure is connected with a series of other personal failings evidenced in the Scripture stories.

The dejected disciples begin to change only when they are enlightened by the risen Christ, who explains from the sacred Scriptures how God works in a resistant world and among resistant, sinful people like us. It is, indeed, an ironic victory because the forces of rejection and experiences of suffering

and sinfulness themselves become the means by which God's purpose is accomplished in the world! For Cleopas and his unnamed companion on that first Easter, their journey was a gradual, painstaking process requiring a careful remembering and re-articulation of the events of salvation history found in the Scriptures, along with an experience of the Risen Lord. It is no less the same for 21st Century Christians who continue to interpret the Scriptures in this day and age and move from faith-filled insights to a proclamation and lived experience of the one who is truly risen from the dead.

Let me conclude with this prayer for the Easter season.

Crucified and Risen Lord,
We are companions with you on the journey.
We follow your footsteps through the desert
to listen to the powerful Word of the God of Israel
spoken in our own deserts.
We follow you into Galilee,
to understand and experience your ministry of presence and healing.
We join the great crowd that came to meet you crying,
"Hosanna! Blessed is the One who comes in the name of the Lord!"
We walk with you on the road to Golgotha and share in your passion.
In the suffering of our brothers and sisters,
we recognize your own suffering and dying.
We journey with you on the road to Emmaus
and discover you in the breaking and sharing of the Word and the Bread.
Show us the glory of your resurrection.
Open our eyes, our hearts, and our minds,
so that we may always find you in the midst of your holy people,
and among all those who thirst for you, wherever they may be.
Write your Gospel upon our hearts.
Send us forth carrying the good news.
Continue to lead and guide us on our pilgrimage
to the heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.



T

his article is unusual.

My assignment is to provide an in-depth feature on the Cursillo movement, an initiative aimed at bringing Christian values to society one person at a time. I went on a recent Cursillo retreat weekend and am now a movement participant – a Cursillista – so one might envision my hands poised atop my keyboard.

Unfortunately, I am not allowed to write what I have to write.

Sound unusual yet? In order to let the Cursillo weekend and other gatherings unfold on God's time, the so-called "Cursillo method" is a secret. Also, unless they choose otherwise, participants' personal experiences in the movement must remain confidential.

Since I respect these ground rules, I am left breaking the "Fourth Wall" of journalism (to borrow a theatrical term): I have to speak to the audience. Every person's experience with Cursillo is unique to his or her needs and gifts, but this is how Cursillo has shaped my faith journey. This is My Story.

What is Cursillo?

I can reveal the purpose and history of the Cursillo movement. This information is public knowledge, so my halo is still on straight.

Cursillo is a decades-old movement that seeks to renew society in accordance with Christian values via the personal witness and evangelization efforts of the people in the movement. Participants experience a Precursillo timeframe, a three-day Cursillo weekend and a Fourth Day, when the

Cursillistas return to the "real world."

The word *Cursillo* is Spanish for *little course*, and a Cursillo weekend is basically a short course in Christianity. Despite the name's link to the retreat stage, the Fourth Day is actually the most important part of Cursillo. The point of the movement is to help its members live their faith for the betterment of society.

The National Cursillo Movement explains: "Cursillos in Christianity is a movement that, through a method of its own, tries to, and through God's grace manages to, enable the essential realities of the Christian to come to life in the

uniqueness, originality and creativity of each person. ... The Cursillo movement consists of proclaiming the best news of the best reality: that God, in Christ, loves us."

Cursillo began taking shape between the world wars, when a movement called Catholic Action was trying to strengthen the faith of people in Spain despite anti-clerical influences in the government. As part of that movement, organizers planned a pilgrimage along the famous Camino de Santiago de Compostela (Way of St. James). In order to train leaders for the trip, the group devised cursillos – little courses.

Soon, the courses tran-

sitioned from pilgrimage preparation to preparation for Christian living, and, in 1949, organizers held the first Cursillo retreat sanctioned by ecclesiastical authorities.

Today, Cursillo is present in more than 60 countries – even in non-Catholic denominations. It is one of the largest Christian movements in the world.

The "Cursillo method" has been around since the group's inception, and organizers are adamant it must unfold during the weekends without participants knowing or expecting what is to come. As someone who recently experienced a three-day Cursillo retreat, I think said organizers have a point. We can sometimes

drown out God's voice with our own expectations.

What I Learned

Since I cannot write about how I learned during my Cursillo retreat, I will instead write about what I learned. To do that I must first admit what I did not already know.

When I was in undergraduate school for journalism, I was heading for a promising career in public radio. I was at a good school; I was already heavily published/broadcast in large markets; and I was the head of what we thought to be the largest and most award-winning student radio news department

My fellow Cursillistas and I pose at the St. Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center in Romeoville during the diocese's 107th Women's Cursillo weekend.

in the nation. When I heard the expression – "Want to make God laugh? Tell him your plans" – I laughed.

Then God called me to serve in the Catholic Church. Ha!

I started applying to music school so I could offer my gifts at the parish level. Back then, every friend, family member and teacher I consulted told me I was nuts. (I barely read music; I was nuts.) Still, I felt called, so I began studying and practicing ferociously. I got accepted into two schools and concurrently



My Cursillo Story

completed master's degrees in sacred music (during the school year) and liturgy (during the summers). Then I moved to New Zealand to study culture; learned Spanish in South America; traveled to a dozen countries; and came back to serve the Catholic Church in the United States.

Now, I am a staff writer for *Christ is our Hope*, and I work as a pastoral musician at my parish. I am still persistent about maintaining and growing the gifts God has given me in order to better serve his people and him.

That said, Cursillo helped me realize I spent so many years powering past obstacles that I had forgotten how to be still and know that God is God (Psalm 46:11). Instead, I fretted over Luke 12:48: "Much will be required

of the person entrusted with much, and still more will be demanded of the person entrusted with more." I felt I had a lot of giving to do! Cursillo made me calm down and ponder 1 John 4:10: "In this is love: not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as expiation for our sins." God never asked me to earn his love and grace; he just gave them to me.

Cursillo prompted me to think about my ideals. I was

quick to state mine as "to do God's will," but, during the retreat, I started to relearn what that means. Isn't it God's will that he be the center of my life? Isn't it his will that I recognize he made me in his image and that, therefore, I am inherently good (and would be even if I could not sing or write or take a photograph)? Isn't it God's will that I pause to give thanks in the presence of a crucifix? Isn't it God's will that I let in his love and grace and Holy Spirit?

Of course, I am sure my service is God's will too. I have not developed selective memory for Scripture, and I plan to continue laboring for God's harvest.

The difference (the conversion, really) is that now I realize God is the fuel for my jour-

ney. People who have met me over the years have called me "grounded," and I have tended to dismiss such statements. "Of course I'm grounded," I thought. "I'm a Christian." I now know, far from dismissing my grounding in God as a given, I have to nurture it with prayer and reflection. I have to let God love me first.

New Perspective

Cursillo also showed me I had already learned how to put God's love first. I just had to slow down and remember.

Countless people and groups prayed for us candidates and sent us words of encouragement during our Cursillo weekend. The best encouragement

I got was a coincidence, really. We happened to be staying at the St. Charles Borromeo Pastoral Center, where I work for the magazine. My co-worker who prepares the dormitories for retreats found out my room number and left me some flowers and a note wishing me a nice weekend.

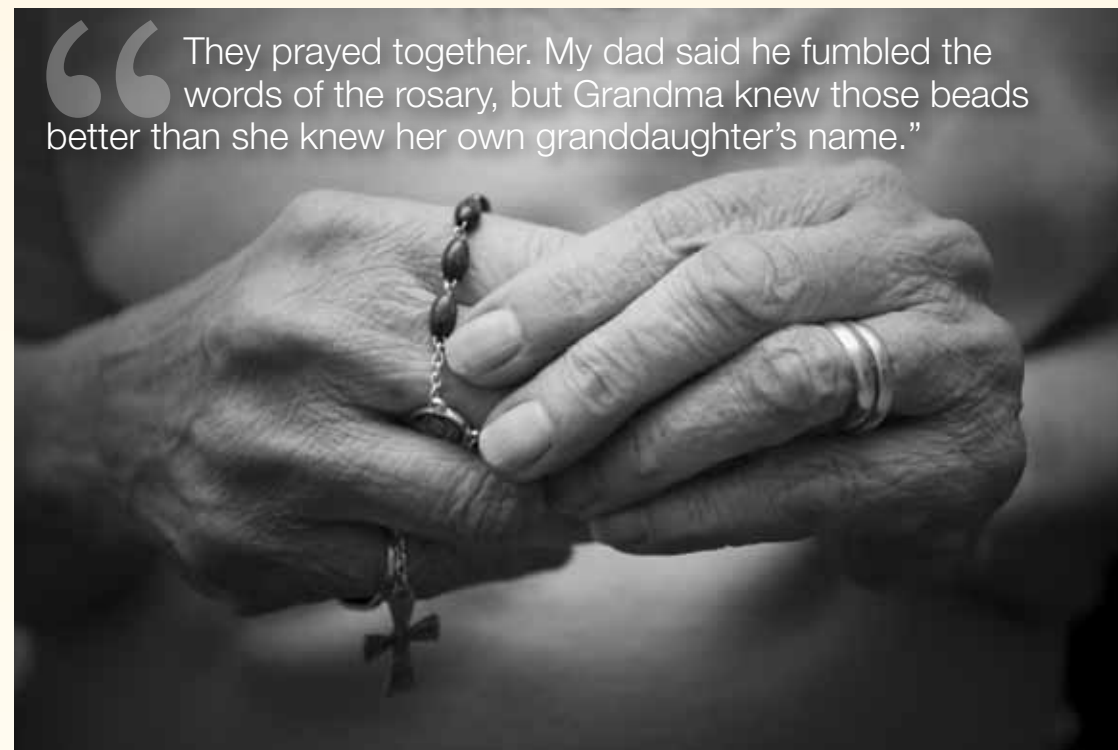
Her note's real message was how simple gestures can witness a loving heart.

The weekend also caused me to reflect on how, as a Catholic journalist, I often worry about providing people with the best information possible in order to encourage their evangelization and catechesis. After all, I am not a theologian, and I find myself cringing at verses like James 3:1: "Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, for you realize that we will be judged more strictly." That's a lot of pressure!

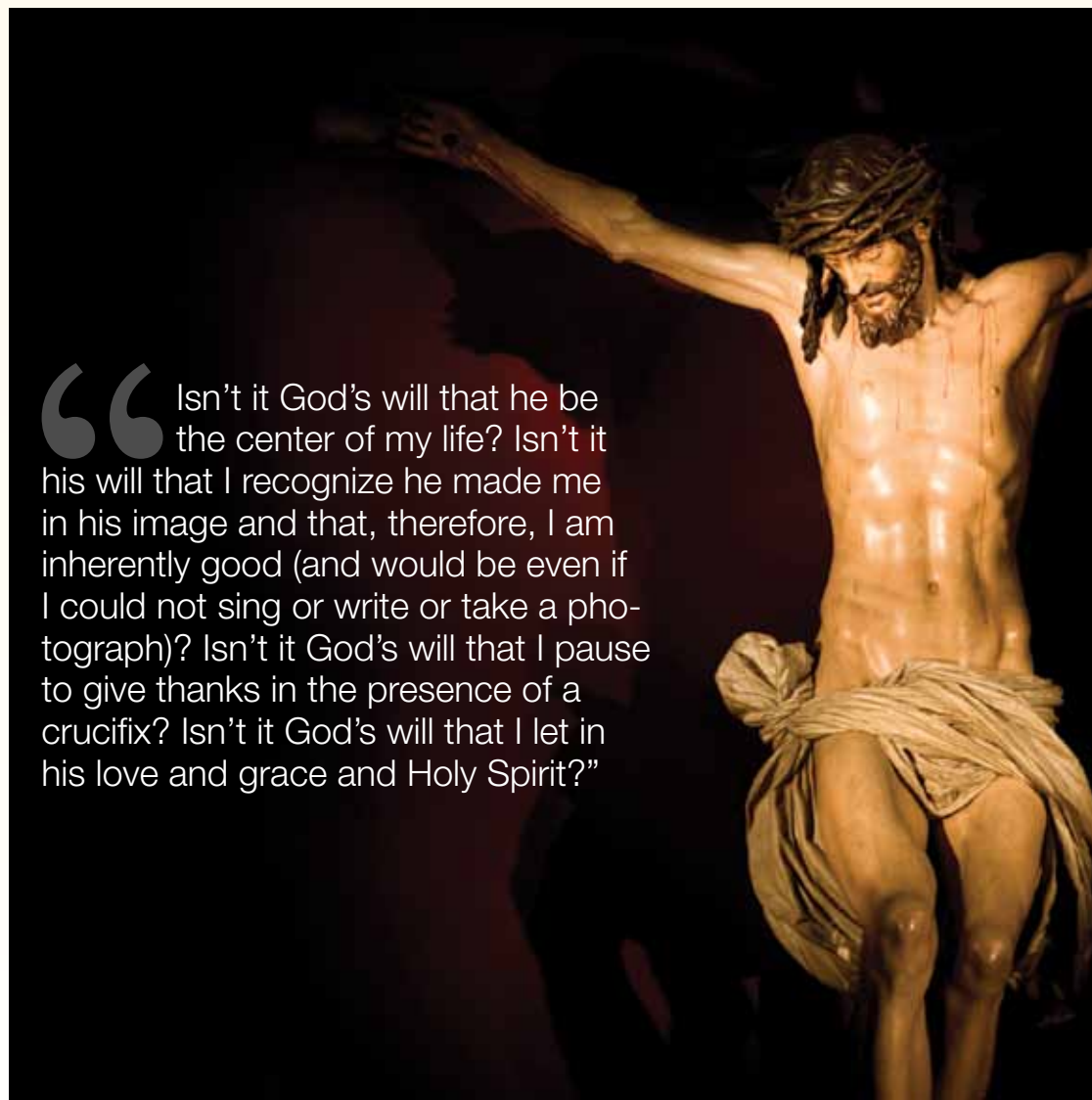
I am starting to study theology to keep me on track, but, during my Cursillo weekend, I learned another college degree is not the key to witnessing the Catholic faith – God is.

My Cursillo table members and I talked about our most profound moments of prayer. Uncharacteristically, I teared up when I talked about my grandfather's death from cancer when I was 12 years old. At that time in my life, I did not understand life, death or illness, and I could not appreciate our family's final time with "Gramps." One weekend my family went to visit him, and,

They prayed together. My dad said he fumbled the words of the rosary, but Grandma knew those beads better than she knew her own granddaughter's name."



Isn't it God's will that he be the center of my life? Isn't it his will that I recognize he made me in his image and that, therefore, I am inherently good (and would be even if I could not sing or write or take a photograph)? Isn't it God's will that I pause to give thanks in the presence of a crucifix? Isn't it God's will that I let in his love and grace and Holy Spirit?"



as we were leaving, I went out to the car to read, impatiently waiting for the others. "Something" knocked me off my metaphorical horse and told me what was going on – told me it was the end. I ran inside to say good bye to my grandfather. It was the last time I saw him alive.

My most profound experience talking to God did not come from a theology class. It did not require me to write an article, to ask the right questions or to be the "right" age. All I had to do was listen – and God spoke.

My Cursillo experience also made me think of my grandmother (on the other side of the family), who died when she was 92 years old. I was living in New Zealand when she passed away, but my father told me that, for the last year or more of her life, she kept asking God why she was still alive. A devout Catholic, she wanted to see her deceased loved ones! She was senile and had not known me the last time I had seen her, but my father went to visit her (a five-and-a-half-hour drive, each way) most weekends.

They prayed together. My dad

said he fumbled the words of the rosary, but Grandma knew those beads better than she knew her own granddaughter's name. When she died my father wept and mourned and loved. To me that answered my grandmother's question. Faith, love and joy in sorrow were her parting gifts to my family.

She was senile. Dad did not remember the words – but God spoke.

Our Stories

As a journalist I know each person has his or her own story, often a mere interview from the surface. We each have our moments of depression, of loneliness, of triumph and of joy.

As a Cursillista I know each person's story leads him or her down a different path of faith and toward a unique Fourth Day.

My Story – My Cursillo Story – has taught me I was silly to think God had called me when I was in college. He had called me – and loved me – as a child in my mother's womb, and he will continue calling me when I am 92 and ready to meet him. ☺



Jesus vs. the Easter Bunny

Lamb bread helps win the contest

By Michelle Sessions DiFranco | Photography by Philip Shippert

A

recent trip to Target made me rethink bringing my 2-year-old son anywhere just before lunchtime.

I was in the Easter section of the store looking for cupcake liners when I heard him yell, “candeeeee!” There it stood. A near life-sized cardboard cutout of the Easter Bunny perched beside a monolith of stacked candy. Knowing his screams would only escalate, I picked up the pace and headed for the next aisle. Bad idea. It was still everywhere in plain sight – candy, chocolate and other sugary paraphernalia. Just as I feared, my son turned into a monster – bellowing a roar of greed, impatience and appetite. How very Easter-like. I hurriedly rolled – not one or two, but five aisles away – until we were out of the danger zone.

With all of the marketing and commercialized clutter that herald Easter these days, the Easter Bunny rules supreme. Kids know it well. To them, it’s all about the candy embedded in the fake grass (that annoyingly sticks to the upholstery). For many, with the exception of a Lenten resolution and going to Easter Mass, there isn’t much out there to remind them of the true meaning of Easter. That job rests almost entirely on good old Mom and Dad.

When my husband was growing up, there was one tangible item on the dinner table every Easter that was symbolic of our Savior, though. It might not be as sugary as a Cadbury Egg or jellybeans, but kids love it because it is creative and recognizable. The “Lamb Bread,” as it is simply named, takes the shape of an actual lamb. If we, parents (or grandparents, aunts and uncles), take the time to explain its symbolism, it puts a few more points on the home-team score board during the annual Jesus-vs.-Easter Bunny rivalry.

Bread is, of course, representative of the body of Christ. The shape of

Lamb Bread

- 1 1/2 packages active dry yeast
- 1/2 cup warm water (not hot)
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 3/4 cup warm milk
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup butter (softened)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt

- 3 to 3 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 1 raisin

Egg Wash

- 1 egg white
- 1 tablespoon water

Dissolve yeast, then sugar in warm water. Let stand for 10 minutes until frothy.

In a large bowl, combine warm milk, sugar, butter and salt. Stir in yeast mixture. With a mixer or by hand, slowly mix in half of the flour until well blended. Continue to mix in more flour until a stiff dough is formed. Knead until dough is smooth and elastic.

Place in a bowl lightly greased with cooking oil. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and a towel and store in a warm place until dough doubles in size (about an hour).

Punch down the dough and separate into four even portions.

Roll first portion into a 9” x 6” oval (body) 1/4” thick. Trim an inch off across the top and place onto a greased cookie sheet.

Roll another portion into a 9” rope. Divide as follows: one 4” section (head), two 1” sections (tail and ear), and two 1 1/2” sections (legs). Shape head into an oval and attach to body. Pinch to seal. Shape nose and flatten head slightly. Roll each leg to 2” long ovals and attach to bottom of body. Pinch to seal. Shape tail and ear and attach. Pinch to seal.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Whisk egg white and water in a small bowl. Set aside.

Using the remaining dough, make 24-26 1” balls and then several 1/2” or smaller sized balls. Arrange the 1” balls over the main body leaving 1/4” of border exposed. Arrange smaller balls between the larger balls and on top of the head. Insert a raisin for the eye and cut a vertical slit into each leg.

Brush with the egg wash and bake for 10 minutes. Quickly brush on more egg wash and sprinkle sesame seeds over the head and body. Bake 15-20 minutes longer or until lightly brown on top. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool slightly. Enjoy!



the lamb characterizes the sacrifice of Jesus. To the kids, the whole thing is “neat,” “cute,” or “cool” – and the boys usually vie for who gets to eat the bread. But if a little explanation can be given

before the bread is broken, kids can be given a little seed of understanding into the miracle of Christ – a seed that will hopefully one day bloom into an adult Catholic faith.





La presencia de Jesús resucitado

Miguel Moreno es el Director de la Oficina Diocesana del Ministerio Hispano. Usted puede comunicarse con él a mmoreno@dioceseofjoliet.org.



costado, tal vez, ser separados de la gente sensata o ser marginados de las actividades públicas. Su historia no hubiera tenido importancia alguna. Se hubiera perdido y olvidado en el tiempo. Pero, esa no era toda la historia, ni todo el testimonio que debían dar. Eso era la parte primera del mensaje, es decir, el fundamento para su segunda

Los apóstoles vivieron un acontecimiento que va más allá de la experiencia humana y cuyo testimonio les costó más de un enfrentamiento y la vida misma.

Hubiera sido fácil hablar de un robo, de un accidente o de alguna pelea de las tantas que hay. Sin embargo, ellos fueron elegidos para dar testimonio de algo sobrenatural y, a la misma vez, peligroso.

La experiencia que todos tenemos de la vida es que ella empieza con el nacimiento y termina con la muerte. Si alguien dice lo contrario, está yendo en sentido opuesto a la experiencia de todo ser humano y, eso es justamente, lo que vivieron los apóstoles un acontecimiento que desborda la experiencia de todo mortal – un acontecimiento que se encuentra por encima de lo natural. Por eso se habla de una “experiencia sobrenatural.” Ellos debían manifestar a todo el mundo que aquella persona que hacía tres días murió en la cruz había vuelto a la vida, que aquella persona había resucitado!

Al decir esto, se escuchaba más de una carcajada entre las gentes. Se les acusaba, entonces, de “locos,” “borrachos,” “charlatanes.” No era para menos, ¿quién podría afirmar que un muerto, vive? Además, ¿quién podría creer cosa semejante? Y, sin embargo, a pesar del ridículo que sus propias palabras les causaba, los apóstoles no cesaron de decir y defender con firmeza lo que sus ojos vieron, sus oídos escucharon: en una palabra, lo que todo su ser había experimentado: La presencia de Jesús resucitado. ¡Qué experiencia para extraordinaria!

Pero ser tratados como locos, borrachos, charlatanes, les hubiera

afirmación, que aquel que murió en la cruz y que tres días después resucitó de entre los muertos, no era otro, sino el mismo Mesías, el Salvador, el Redentor, el mismo Dios.

Al decir esto, las carcajadas de los oyentes se volvían en escupitajos, palos y piedras, que eran lanzados con fuerza y dureza intentado buscar su muerte.

¿Por qué esta reacción feroz de los oyentes? Porque siendo fervientes religiosos judíos, no iban a permitir que alguien les hablara de Dios de esa forma. Ellos tomaban el mensaje de los apóstoles como un insulto a Dios, una blasfemia, una falta de respeto a lo sagrado.

Sin embargo, los apóstoles eran tan judíos y tan religiosos como sus oyentes. Conocían perfectamente la ley y amaban a Dios sobre todas las cosas y era justamente su amor a Dios lo que les llevaba a ponerse de pie en medio de una multitud que ellos bien sabían no iban a recibir el mensaje con agrado. Pero ellos debían cumplir con su misión, debían ser testigos. Por eso, cuando se acercaban a los pueblos preparaban sus espíritus como sus cuerpos para empezar su misión evangelizadora. Cuando las piedras empezaban a caer, se cubrían con lo que podían y salían corriendo; pero no con el temor de volver a entrar al pueblo sino con la alegría de haber cumplido con su misión; la alegría de haber compartido la fe; la alegría de haber sido testigos de la resurrección del Señor.

Y es el testimonio de esta experiencia sobrenatural de los apóstoles por la cual dieron su vida, la que une a todos los católicos hoy en día: aquel que murió en la cruz ha resucitado de entre los muertos para darnos a todos la salvación.

En la fe y en la alegría de los apóstoles, por lo que vivieron y por lo que murieron: ¡Feliz fiesta de resurrección! ☕

You can read Miguel's column in English at dioceseofjoliet.org.

Año de la Eucaristía – Cristo resucitado presente en nuestra Iglesia: Este mes iniciamos nuestro Año de la Eucaristía en toda nuestra diócesis. Tendremos conferencias, retiros, películas, lecturas, rosarios, procesiones, confesiones, vigiliias y otros eventos más, para remarcar nuestro amor y devoción a la Presencia Santísima de Cristo en la Eucaristía. No olvides de pedir información en tu parroquia. Dios es grande y bondadoso con su pueblo.
Instituto de Formación Padre Miguel Pro: El 24 de abril se

graduaron 35 del Centro San Carlos de Romeoville y 16 del Centro Santa Teresa de Kankakee después de haber cumplido sus tres años de formación. Nuestra Iglesia ofrece este programa a todas las personas que deseen conocer o profundizar más de su fe católica. Todos son bienvenidos.
Año Sacerdotal: La Iglesia Católica está celebrando el Año Sacerdotal por tal motivo el 7 de mayo a las 7 p.m. en el Centro San Carlos Borromeo de Romeoville se homenajeará a todos los sacerdotes que ejercen su ministerio con la comunidad hispana. En nuestra

diócesis hay 18 parroquias donde se brinda servicios en español. A todos los sacerdotes responsables de esta misión evangelizadora: ¡muchas gracias! A todos ellos, gracias por compartir la fe, la esperanza y la caridad con el pueblo hispano.
Adoremus al Padre en Espíritu y Verdad: Los viernes de 7 p.m. en la parroquia de San Andrés (530 Glenn, Romeoville) se reúnen los jóvenes a orar frente al Santísimo. Noche de oración, reflexión y canto. Une tu voz a la de muchos para alabar a Dios en espíritu y en verdad.

What in the world?

The top 10 Catholic news events this month

- 1**
Series from Vatican secret archives on Pius XII going digital – Soon, 12 volumes of World War II documents from the Holy See, during the time of Pope Pius XII, will be published online.
- 2**
Catholic nominated for China's top 10 people of 2009 awards – Wang Ping An, a 71-year-old Catholic, was named as a candidate for having spent more than 23 years taking care of the elderly, abandoned children and the sick and disabled.
- 3**
Spanish laity condemns offensive use of crucifix – The Laity Committee of the Diocese of Almeria in Spain issued a statement condemning the use of an image of Christ on the cross to parody the economic crisis the country is experiencing by a local group.
- 4**
Lebanon celebrates 1600th anniversary of Saint Maron's death – The patriarch of Antioch of the Maronites celebrated Mass at the Cathedral of St. George, marking the 1,600th anniversary of the death of Saint Maron, father of the Maronite rite and patron saint of Lebanon.
- 5**
Church honors patron of Sudan, Saint Josephine Bakhita – On Feb. 8, the church commemorated the life of Saint Josephine Bakhita, a Canossian sister who was kidnapped and sold into slavery in Sudan.
- 6**
Catholics in Costa Rica outraged by disrespect of the Eucharist – Catholics in Costa Rica expressed disgust following the actions of the girlfriend of presidential candidate Otto Guevara, who broke off a piece of the Eucharist and placed it in his pocket.
- 7**
Relics of Saint Bernadette brought to Saint Peter's by pilgrims – Five thousand sick people, supported by family and friends, accompanied the relics of St Bernadette Soubirous to Saint Peter's Square for the World Day of the Sick.
- 8**
Catholic relief groups plan for Haiti's future – Archbishop Auza, apostolic nuncio to Haiti, met with the Caritas affiliates at the Holy See's embassy in the Haitian capital to examine relief operations and long-term challenges.
- 9**
Catholics and Mormons unite around religious liberty – Cardinal Francis George spoke at Brigham Young University and emphasized that Mormons and Catholics share a commitment to religious liberty in the United States.
- 10**
Disagreements on ethics end Catholic sponsorship of Oregon hospital – Citing continued disagreement on Catholic ethical directives such as sterilization, the Catholic Diocese of Baker announced it was ending its official sponsorship of Saint Charles Medical Center in Bend.

Father Corley dies

Father Thomas F. Corley died on Feb. 20 at the age of 87. Upon completion of seminary studies at Sacred Heart School of Theology in Hales Corners, Wisc., Father Corley was ordained to the priesthood on June 1, 1985, at the Cathedral of St. Raymond by Bishop Joseph L. Imesch. He ministered at St. James Parish in Glen Ellyn (1985) and at Assumption Parish in Coal City (1987) until he retired (1997) to St. John Vianney Villa in Naperville. In addition to his pastoral responsibilities, he served as spiritual director for the Legion of Mary.

Help the poor in Kenya

The Peace and Social Justice Ministry of the Diocese of Joliet announces the formation of new mission teams to travel to Naivasha, Kenya, in September 2010. These teams will serve the poorest of the poor in this poverty stricken country in sub-Saharan Africa.

The Medical Mission needs surgeons in all specialties, particularly orthopedics, ophthalmology, plastic surgery, anesthesiology and dentistry. Nursing staff will include the following specialties: perioperative, operation room and anesthesiologist nurses. A physical therapist and/or an occupational therapist are also needed. Also needed are nurses to

work in a clinic at Upendo Village, a rescue facility for women and children affected by HIV/AIDS. (See upendovillage.org.) Persons with skills in these areas should contact Helen Bills at the Peace and Social Justice Ministry: (815) 834-4028.

The Catholic Construction Corps will work on various projects aimed at improving living and sanitary conditions around Naivasha. Many of the poor live in makeshift homes with dirt floors – no running water and no sanitation facilities. This is a major cause of health problems. The Corps is looking for skilled laborers, people who are handy around their homes – or just people with willing hands and loving hearts. For more information contact Art Sheridan at (815) 834-4072.

The teams will begin orientation and formation in May/June. These missions are faith-based ecumenical ministries. People of any denomination can apply.

For more information and to download a mission application, go to paxjoliet.org. Click on "missions" and then "get involved!"

Catholics gather in Springfield to promote Gospel values

Catholics from around the state – including bishops from Illinois – congregated at the Capitol building in Springfield on March 3 to advocate for various Gospel values.

Organized by the Catholic Conference of Illinois, the Catholics at the Capitol day was a chance for lawmakers to learn about eight issues selected by the conference that are important to Catholics. Here were the issues:

- the defeat of radical legislation mandating public funding of abortion and undermining healthcare rights of conscience and Illinois' Parental Notification law;
- restoring funding cuts to programs important to Catholic schools;
- opposition to legislation equating same-sex unions to marriage;
- support for legislation mandating that a woman seeking an abortion be offered the opportunity to view a sonogram before the procedure;
- support for legislation providing vouchers to families of the worst Chicago public schools to offset the tuition costs at local private schools;
- budgetary action to maintain funding for English and adult education for immigrants;
- budgetary action to maintain funding for the social services safety net to provide for the poor and vulnerable;
- legislation to finally abolish the death penalty.

Visit these websites to promote Catholic issues in politics: catholicconferenceofillinois.org and faithfulcitizenship.org.

Peace Day: Sponsored by the diocese's Peace and Social Justice Ministry, this year's event, on May 1 at the St. Charles Pastoral Center in Romeoville, is entitled: "Eucharist: Bread Broken for the Life of the World." Exhibits and registration begin at 1 p.m. Program commences at 2 p.m. with two sessions of workshops, beginning at 2:30 p.m. and at 3:30 p.m. Mass is at 4:30 p.m. Dinner with entertainment at 6:15 p.m. RSVP by e-mail, jenruh@dioceseofjoliet.org, or by phone, (815) 834-4028.

For more events around the diocese, go to dioceseofjoliet.org/calendar2010-04.asp.

College Seminary Visits: The Vocations Office will be sponsoring a free trip for males who are juniors in high school and older to Conception Seminary College in Northwest Missouri April 17 to 19. It will be a great opportunity to meet seminarians and see seminary life firsthand. For more information contact the Vocations Office at (815) 834-4004.

Vocation discernment group: This group is open to all males who are juniors in high school and older. The meeting will take place on April 21, from 6-8 p.m., at the John Paul II House in Joliet. The group will discuss different aspects of priesthood with current priests and seminarians from the diocese. For more information contact the Vocations Office at (815) 834-4004.

Eucharist: Food for the Journey of Discipleship

Tom Quinlan is the director of the diocesan Religious Education Office.

Have you ever taken a long car trip? Most of us probably have. Can you remember what it was like? The sights, the fun, the fatigue, the stops. Long travels – whether in a car, on a bike or on a trail out in nature – can, upon reflection, be a metaphor for the journey of life.

Sometimes our lives are headed uphill, sometimes downhill. Sometimes we're traveling in sunny, pleasant conditions; sometimes we're immersed in clouds, fog and even the dark of night. But, no matter, onward we go because we have a destination that we need to reach.

For the Catholic person, the road of life is traveled in faith. Baptism is important because it is our starting point and our compass. It orients us for the journey of discipleship, the close following of our Lord, Jesus. Baptism gives us a special grace-filled relationship with Christ, and, through him, to all the baptized who become our sisters and brothers in Christ.

Now, if baptism sends us forth on a path of Christian discipleship, the Eucharist is our food for the journey.

Whether we refer to it as the Bread of Life, the Blessed Sacrament or the body of Christ, the Eucharist is the most intimate gift Christ leaves to us. In a way no one can fully grasp, it actually is the presence of Christ with us and in us. The Eucharist is real food and real drink, ordinary foods made from wheat and grapes that we lift up to God, returned to us as the extraordinary sacrament of Christ for us. It is made possible by Jesus' act of complete surrender to the will of the Father, whereby he offers up his life, his love

“The Eucharist contains Jesus' everything, given so that we might live more fully here in this world and ultimately be granted a share in life eternal.”

and, finally, his body and blood on the cross.

The Eucharist embodies the transformative power of the cross. It represents the Paschal Mystery, from which we know that, in Christ, death no longer has power to destroy – that God's grace is greater than sin and darkness. The Eucharist contains Jesus' everything, given so that we might live more fully here in this world and ultimately be granted a share in life eternal.

Certainly, this is something to keep in mind on those days we might feel resistant to attending Mass. Or, when we find ourselves a bit bored and wondering what we are getting out of Mass. Mass is, of course, more about participation than simply receiving. It is more about us than me. The Eucharist, as liturgy, is a communal act of divine worship, where

everyone's full presence and active prayer is vital in this greatest prayer of the church.

After all God has done for us in Christ, why would we ever try to travel through life without help? Jesus knew how difficult it would be for us to follow in his path. That is precisely why he gave us his body and blood, mystically present in the Eucharist, so that he could be intimately present to us, nourishing us for the journey of Christ-like discipleship.

Our National Directory for Catechesis reminds us, "We are called to realize that we become what we receive ... which has great implications for how we live and act." Saying "amen" when we take the Eucharist should not only be a "yes, I believe," but also a "yes, I become."

In this Year of the Eucharist and always, may the Eucharist not only be the body of Christ for us, but may it also be our food to help us together to become more fully the voice, the heart and the body of Christ for our families, for our neighborhoods and for our world today.

Prayer of the Year of the Eucharist and Eucharistic Congress

Jesus, may all that is you flow into me.
May your Body and Blood be my food and drink.
May your passion and death be my strength and life.
Jesus, with you by my side enough has been given.
May the shelter I seek be the shadow of your cross.
Let me not run from the love which you offer,
but hold me safe from the forces of evil.
On each of my dyings shed your light and your love.
Keep calling to me until that day comes,
when, with your saints, I may praise you forever. Amen.
Lord Jesus, Bread of Life and Covenant of Love

- Nourish us with your Body and Blood.

Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament

- Pray for us.

– Translation of the “Anima Christ” by David L. Fleming, SJ. Cited in “Hearts on Fire: Praying with Jesuits,” ed. Michael Harter, SJ, Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, MO, 1993.

Oración Por El Año De La Eucaristía Y El Congreso Eucarístico

Jesús, que todo lo que eres, llegue a mí.
Que tu Cuerpo y Sangre sean mi comida y bebida.
Que tu Pasión y Muerte sean mi fuerza y vida.
Jesús, contigo a mi lado, suficiente se me ha sido dado.
Que el refugio que busco sea la sombra de tu cruz.
No dejes que me aparte del amor que tú me ofreces,
sino más bien, mantenme fuerte, lejos de las fuerzas del mal.
En cada una de mis muertes, arroja tu luz y tu amor.
Continúa llamándome hasta que ese día llegue,
cuando, con tus santos, pueda alabarte por siempre. Amén.
Señor Jesús, Pan de Vida y Alianza de Amor

- Aliméntanos con tu Cuerpo y con tu Sangre.

Nuestra Señora del Santísimo Sacramento

- Ruega por nosotros.

– Una adaptación de la oración “Alma de Cristo” por P. David L. Fleming, S.J. Citado en el libro “Hearts on Fire: Praying with Jesuits,” Editado por Michael Harter, S.J., Institute of Jesuit Sources, St. Louis, MO, 1993.

