**EUCHARISTIC REVIVAL REFLECTION**

“It is good to adore in silence before the Most Blessed Sacrament,” he said, “to be in the consoling presence of Jesus and there to draw the apostolic impetus to be instruments of goodness, tenderness and welcome in the community, the Church, and the world.”

Pope Francis – October 2022.

My greatest joy as a priest, has been to celebrate the Sacraments of the Church. Being a sinner myself, it is very humbling that God calls the unworthy to do the worthiest of His work. Hearing confessions and allowing God to work through me to absolve sins is both humbling and inspiring. To baptize children and to bring a new life spiritually into the Church is cause for great joy in my life. To be at the bedside of a dying person and anoint them while helping to console a grieving family has made me appreciate the healing grace of God in the most trying circumstances.

“O beauty ever ancient, ever new.” These words spoken by St. Augustine capture not only timeless aspect of our God and Savior Jesus Christ but encapsulate what the Church has embodied for the last two-thousand years. The source and summit of our faith of course is the Holy Eucharist, the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ. There is nothing new in what the Eucharist is and will always be, but as time goes by and new eras in the Church arise, our same unchanging faith becomes new again, becomes fresh again, and is presented to us through a new lens. The Eucharistic Revival, in which the Church is embarking on aims to refocus and revitalize the belief that Christ is truly present in His sacraments. One of the definitions of revival in the religious sense is “a reawakening of religious fervor. It is no secret that in our Church today, there has been a decline not only in attendance, but in belief of the true presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

One of the aims of this Eucharistic Revival is to invite people to experience in a whole new way, the reality of Jesus in their lives. This reality can only be fully realized by having a relationship with Jesus. The National Eucharistic Revival website page articulates that throughout the history of the Church, there has been scandal, division, disease, and doubt, and that the Church has survived all of these at different times. Today, however, all these forces are converging together. The Eucharistic Revival is a response to these forces. The revival reminds us as a Church, that despite all these obstacles and crosses, Jesus Christ has not abandoned us. He is with us, and He will bring us through. How is he present to us? The source and summit of our faith, our foundation, and are unity as Catholics is in the Holy Eucharist. When we come together at Mass, we receive God made man, so that we might become like God, as St. Athanasius said.

As the Eucharistic Revival continues, the diocese of Youngstown, has been an active participant. Bishop Bonnar has celebrated with the faithful across the six counties of the diocese through masses, eucharistic processions, and holy hours. During this next phase of the revival, parishes are encouraged at the local level to highlight the importance of the Eucharist within their own communities. There may be some parishes that already offer extensive Eucharistic Adoration, while others may need some instruction to incorporate it into their life of prayer. This is a great time for us all to learn more about the power of the Eucharist, and how it can shape and transform our lives.

Wherever we are in our faith journey, whatever background in our relationship with Christ, it is never too late to learn more and to grow in our understanding and appreciation in the power of the Sacraments of the Church. We believe as Catholics, that in the Eucharist dwells the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ. What a tremendous gift we all share, that we can receive the real presence of Christ at every Mass. It is truly awe inspiring as a priest to see that tremendous effects that the Sacrament has on the people that I minister to. Now is the time to become closer to Jesus!

You may be asking, what can I do to promote the Eucharistic Revival in my own church or community? The first thing to do is check the national Eucharistic Revival website. The website is <https://www.eucharisticrevival.org/>. You can also encourage activities and programs with your own parish and community. You can also check in to our own diocesan website pertaining to the Eucharistic Revival which is <https://doy.org/eucharisticrevival/>. You can also learn more and discuss with your family and friends ways that you can become more devoted to the Blessed Sacrament. The wellspring of graces that are within our faith are limitless. Those graces will be poured out in abundance to those who want to walk closer with Jesus and His Church. May the Lord Jesus Christ truly present in the Blessed Sacrament pour out His love upon us and lead us all to a renewed spirit in our walk with Him.

from Father Ryan Furlong