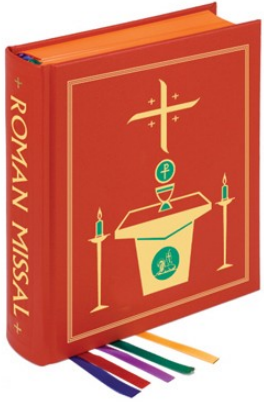


Liturgy Links

November 2011



Belong More Deeply

In less than two weeks we will begin praying with the revised texts of the *Third Edition of the Roman Missal*. I haven't sent out a newsletter in quite awhile, and I apologize for that, but this is as good a time as any to get back into keeping all our liturgical ministers up to date on things that are going on and to offer some reflections. Bishop Murphy, in his pastoral letter *Belong More Deeply*, which came out last Advent, asks us to "draw more closely into the life of Christ." He quotes Pope Benedict XVI who tells us that our faith is "essentially a Eucharistic faith." We must give witness to that faith, but in order to do so, Bishop Murphy writes, "we have to be part of what we believe," and what we have to be a part of is a person, not simply a set of beliefs or rules. We have to belong to Christ.

As we approach the Solemnity of Christ the King this Sunday I thought it good to suggest that you reflect on the Prayer after Communion at Mass (the last time we will be using this prayer)

*Lord, you give us Christ, the King of all creation,
as food for everlasting life.
Help us to live by His Gospel
and bring us to the joy of His Kingdom
Where He lives and reigns for ever and ever.*

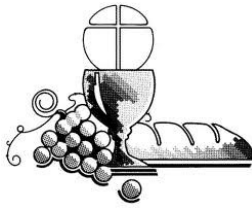
There is a lot in this prayer to reflect upon (to wet your appetite, the revised prayer we will be praying next year on this feast is so much richer and strikingly beautiful). I am particularly drawn to the first sentence. Christ, the King, is our Food. When we assist at Mass we are fed by Christ's Word and by His very Body and Blood. It is the nourishment we need to journey to the Kingdom. Given this fact, we all need to take this time, as the revised texts are implemented, to take a long look at our own understanding of the importance of Scripture and above all the Eucharist.

Lectors: While the Lectionary texts will not be revised we can use this time to renew our commitment to the Word of God. Ask yourself these questions: How important are the Scriptures in my life? Do I read the Bible every day, or at least a few times a week? Do I truly prepare the words I am proclaiming, or do I just show up at church not having read the texts before? Do I understand what I am reading, and if not, do I make an attempt to read a commentary (the Lector Workbooks have good brief commentaries on the readings), or to ask others what passages might mean?

Choir and Cantors: Those who lead us in song at Mass perform an important ministry and you use your God given gift of voice in service to the celebration. Ask yourself: Do I prepare myself by reflecting on the readings for Mass? Most of the times the theme of the readings is reflected in the songs you sing. Do I pay attention to the words I am singing? Do I view my singing at Mass as a performance, or do I truly understand that I am using the gift of my voice in ministry to lead others in praise of God, and do I feel I am praising God myself through my voice?

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: The Eucharist is the greatest gift that Jesus has given us and none of us is worthy to receive this gift much less to perform this ministry. So ask yourself: Is my life rooted in the Eucharist (this should hold true for all Catholics)? Am I truly humbled by performing this ministry? What feelings does holding and distributing the Body and Blood of Christ evoke in me? Do I realize that my ministry is not a right, but is an assistance to the Eucharistic ministry of the priest? Am I always in the state of grace when receiving communion and especially when acting in the capacity of an EMHC? Do I spend quality time in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament?

I am just offering these questions, not as a correction or as a directive, but as questions that I ask myself to better prepare to serve in the various ministries that I am involved in. The end of the Church year is a good time for introspection, not only our life but on our ministry. As we enter into the Advent season we are asked to "prepare a way for the Lord." We need to be prepared to one day enter "the joy of His Kingdom."



There are a few things that I would like to encourage all our liturgical ministers to perhaps consider doing this Advent if you are not already doing it. One is Eucharistic Adoration. Here at St. Mary's we have Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in our chapel on Thursdays from 1:00—8:00 PM. It is a time to get away from the demands of the world and sit in the presence of the Lord allowing Him to speak to you. Many graces and blessing are received when we spend quiet time with the Lord. Unfortunately, many times it seems as if Our Lord is left alone. It is required that at least two or three people be present when the Eucharist is exposed in the monstrance for Adoration. It often occurs that parishioners who have spent time in adoration cannot leave because there is no one there to replace them and sit with Jesus. People offer a certain period of time to sit in adoration, and when no one else is there these people selflessly give up time that they might have needed to do chores, or keep appointments or sometimes return to work or family. Please consider spending some of your time on Thursdays in adoration. As liturgical ministers this time with Jesus will certainly serve to strengthen you in your ministry. Also parishes where people commit to spend time in adoration have experienced new vocations, and a renewal of parish life. Please, please make a commitment so that we do not have to shorten adoration times because of lack of participation.

Another thing I suggest for this Advent is to spend time with the new texts of the Mass. Listen to the words, not just the words we pray as part of the assembly but the words the priest is praying. Listen for what may be unfamiliar and then sit with them and reflect on them. To get you started, this is the Opening Collect for the First Sunday of Advent. You can find subsequent collects here— <http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/Collaborativeministry/Advent/aweek1.html>

*Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ
with righteous deeds at His coming, so that, gathered at His right hand,
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever*

I also want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your service to the parish. As we heard in this past Sunday's Gospel we are called to take the talents God has given us and increase them in service to God's people to give honor and glory to God. I wish you all a very happy Thanksgiving and may you have a blessed Advent season.

CALENDAR

Adoration continues on Thursdays from 1-8 PM in the chapel.

North Shore Hospital is still in need of EMs to assist in distributing communion to its many Catholic patients. You must have taken the diocesan Part B EM course to qualify. Please call the Volunteer Office at North Shore: 562-4947

Evening of Music to benefit Mother Teresa Home in India
Saturday, Nov. 19 6:00-7:15 in the Marian Room—St. Mary's cantor Catherine Lau, accompanied my John Lau at the piano will offer a selection of sacred music. Free will donation to Caring Hands Foundation. No tickets required.

Lessons & Carols — Sunday, December 4th at 7:00 in the church. Come join our choirs in ushering in the Advent season.

Roman Missal Workshops—the final sessions on the Missal will be held Sunday, Nov. 20 following the 9:00 Mass and Tuesday Nov. 22 at 7:30 PM. Both will be held in the Marian Room. Come and be prepared for the revised texts of the Mass which begin on Nov. 27th.

Help Needed—Some of our ministries need some new volunteers to make up for those who have retired or moved. The **Ministry of Consolation** needs men or women, available to meet with families of the deceased to help prepare the funeral Mass and to assist at the funeral. Our Baptism Program is looking for a few couples who are available about twice a year following the 9:00 Mass to speak briefly with young parents about sharing their faith with their children. Their children can accompany them. Also we could use some people to assist at the Sunday afternoon baptisms several times a year. Contact Jo-Ann if interested.

Additional Information for Lectors

1. **Lector workbooks**—They are on order and I am not sure what the delay is. Hopefully they will arrive this week. You will be notified and they will be available in the sacristy. Please be aware that these workbooks are a valuable resource not only for hints in proclaiming the scriptures but it is filled with background information and commentary of the texts. Some of our priests and deacons use them as well.
2. **Silence and pauses**— The General Instruction of the Roman Missal calls for periods of silence in the Mass. One of the places that calls for it is during the Liturgy of the Word. There should be a pause before the last sentence of each reading and saying “The word of the Lord.” Otherwise it sounds like it is simply part of the reading. When I do diocesan lector training I usually tell lectors to count slowly to three (one potato, two potato, three potato) before saying it. I ask them to make a longer pause between the first reading and the psalm if it is a Mass without a cantor, about a 10 count. The same between the Psalm and the Second reading. These pauses allow time for the words that you just proclaimed to be “digested” so to speak. After all, the assembly is being fed on the word of God and no one likes to rush through a meal without savoring the food.
3. **Check the Readings**—Lectors are reminded that it is very important to check the readings with the priest in the sacristy before Mass. This is especially important during the week when the priest may be using readings for a memorial of a saint or if it is a feast day where there are two readings instead of one before the Gospel. Also on Sundays there may be a choice of readings or an option for a shortened version. It is the choice of the presider as to which of the texts he wants to use. This is why it is necessary to arrive at Mass at least 10 minutes before Mass begins.
4. **Family Mass**—At the 9:00 Mass lectors are reminded that on the 1st and 3rd Sundays the children are dismissed for the Children’s Liturgy of the Word following the Opening Prayer so you will have to wait to begin the reading. You can walk up to the Ambo as they are being dismissed but please do not begin reading until the children have left the church.
5. **Lector Binders**—Please do not remove papers from the binder. Bring the binder up with you to the Ambo or the lectern when reading the petitions or announcements. With regard to the petitions, for your own information, the Prayer of the Faithful will now be known as the **Universal Prayer** in the new Missal, because they are prayers for the universal Church as well as the local Church. Also, do not process out with the binder but do go get it after Mass and bring it to the sacristy for the lector reading at the Mass after yours. As always if the deacon is present he reads the petitions.
6. **Dress Code**—As always you are asked to dress appropriately for Mass. Now with the cold weather I don’t need to ask the ladies not to wear sleeveless or cap sleeve tops, but do watch low necklines. Also ladies, while I prefer skirts (to the knee please), if you are wearing slacks please make sure they are not tight fitting. Long tops with spandex leggings are a big no, no. Remember we are serving as an example for the rest of the assembly as how to dress at Mass. Men should be wearing jackets during the winter months, although most already do all year round.
7. **New Lectors**—I am asking you to be on the lookout for potential lectors. We are especially looking for adults and a few who may be available for weekday masses to fill in or take a day since some of our weekday lectors read twice a week and if they are out sick or away we may be stuck without a lector. If you know a man or woman who you think will make a good lector have them contact me or Rich.

*Again I thank you for all you do in ministry to the people of St. Mary’s Parish.
If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.*