

# Get More Out of Mass This Summer

RENEW YOUR EUCHARISTIC FAITH WITH JOHN 6



**A FIVE-SUNDAY PREACHING SERIES STARTING JULY 28 AT YOUR PARISH**

My dear sisters and brothers,

As many of you are aware, the Church in the United States is about to embark on the third year of the National Eucharistic Revival: the Mission Year. I am grateful and deeply edified to have seen so many of you participate in the national pilgrimage events in June and other initiatives throughout the last two years. I also know many of you are attending the National Eucharistic Congress in Indianapolis, and I assure you of my prayers for a renewed encounter with Jesus' powerful love in the Eucharist.

While Jesus has brought many to a profound love and belief in his presence in the Eucharist, many of our sisters and brothers remain unaware, reject or struggle with this teaching. Pope Francis acknowledged this when speaking about the Eucharistic Revival in the United States. He said, "Sadly, nowadays, there are those among the Catholic faithful who believe that the Eucharist is more a symbol than the reality of the Lord's presence and love."<sup>1</sup> We must proclaim the truth about the Eucharist and invite all to repent, believe and follow Jesus.

In this spirit, I write to you today to announce an upcoming preaching series on the Eucharist in our parishes. Beginning July 28 and concluding August 25, the Church gives us the readings from the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John. The preaching series promotes a revival in each of us as we embark on a journey of purification, recalling the Israelites in Exodus, toward a reinvigorated love for our Lord. I am asking all parishes to preach on common themes during these Sunday Masses so that we can travel this journey together as one Church in Northern Colorado.

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, "Meeting with the National Eucharistic Congress Committee", June 19, 2023.

I have always believed that this chapter is crucial to the efforts of the Eucharistic Revival. I have meditated and prayed with Jesus' rich teachings in this passage over the past 40-plus years. In seeing the Mass as a new Exodus, we are reminded that to approach the table of the Lord's supper is to continue the ongoing process of conversion, leaving everything opposed to Christ behind and following him unreservedly. In joining our sacrifice to Jesus' own, we are brought into communion with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit and are purified, sanctified and fulfilled.

In this chapter, Jesus is clear about the need to eat his flesh and drink his blood. He says, "For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him" (Jn 6:55-56). Many people are surprised to learn that Jesus' initial audience was just as shocked to hear his command as people are today. In this chapter, we see that Jesus' teaching has always been controversial, yet he never wavers or nuances his words in the face of opposition. Controversy, or lack of faith, does not hold the power to change the teaching of Jesus. Jesus is always faithful to his promises.

I am excited to journey together through these Eucharistic mysteries. I pray that the Holy Spirit anoints the preaching of all those communicating these messages and that he also fills your heart and prepares you to receive the life of Christ laid down for you in the Eucharist more fully.

Below is a list of ways I offer to you to participate more fully in the Eucharist.

1. When you arrive at Mass, spend time in quiet, intimate conversation with our Lord to prepare for the Mass. What are you grateful for from the past week? What are you struggling with? What grace do you desire from the Lord in this Mass? Who in your family or among your friends or enemies do you want to pray for? Who are the sick, suffering or those in need that you want to bring into the Eucharist with you as you offer yourself to the Father in the Mass?
2. As the Mass begins, enter it through the opening hymn by singing and making the responses. Speak the responses from your heart, clearly, with no mumbling.
3. When the priest invites you to acknowledge your sins, you are provided 20 to 30 seconds to acknowledge the personal sin that you want to confess from the past week. It is also a time to acknowledge the sins of the world, such as war, hatred of enemies, abortion, euthanasia, human, drug or sexual trafficking, racism, exploiting the poor, turning to idols that lead us away from the dignity of the human person, etc. This is a time for asking the Lord to bring all of us to conversion and repentance of our sins.
4. As you listen to the readings, pray to the Holy Spirit to help you to be attentive and listen to the Word of God. How are his words speaking personally to your heart and his relationship with you?

5. During the homily, pray again to the Holy Spirit to help you listen. Pray for the priest or deacon that he may faithfully proclaim the truth of the Gospel and help you to come to know the mercy and love of Jesus Christ. Where is Jesus calling you to surrender your life more fully to him and to follow him with the total gift of yourself.
6. The prayers of the faithful remind us to pray for the various needs of the world and for reparation of the sins of the world through the one sacrifice of Christ. At the offertory, do you make a conscious gift of offering your life to the Father with Jesus' one sacrifice made present on the altar? Your sacrifice is the gift of your life given to the Father, to surrender yourself to his will, as Jesus surrendered himself to the Father.
7. In the Eucharistic Prayer, listen attentively to the words of consecration. Do you hear Jesus speaking to you personally, "This is my body, which will be given up **for you**...this is the chalice of my blood...which will be **poured out for you**"? When you hear Jesus speak those words, are you convinced in your heart that he is speaking to you?
8. As you pray the Our Father, again pray verbally from the heart and be attentive to the petitions and how you pray them. Don't rush through each petition in a rote way. Do you truly mean each petition?
9. As you give the sign of peace, do it with reverence for the other person.
10. As you prepare to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord, approach the Eucharist with a firm conviction that it is the true presence of the Risen Christ, and say your "Amen" with love and reverence for whom you are receiving. Whether you receive on the tongue or the hand is your personal preference and never that of the priest, deacon or extraordinary minister. What is important is that you know whom you are receiving and that you do so with reverence.
11. Finally, as you go forth from Mass, what mission do you want to carry out during the week to bring the Gospel to your family, coworkers, city and the world? Every disciple is to carry the Good News into the world and to live their faith in Christ in the world.

May God bless you abundantly, and in abiding in his love, may he bring about the revival that he desires in your hearts, the Church and the world!



*Most Reverend Samuel J. Aquila, S.T.L.  
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