

LITURGY BYTES

Meeting Jesus



Did anyone ever ask you if you ever met Jesus? Were you ever able to hear his voice calling you for supper? Have you shaken his hand or sat at his feet listening to him teach? For Catholics, the answer to these questions is YES.

We meet Jesus, hear his voice, shake his hand, listen to him teaching us when we join together at Mass. Naturally, we also dine with him as we eat his body and blood at the Eucharistic celebration either on Sunday or at weekday Mass.

We need things to see, to touch, to taste, and to smell. These all lead to that personal encounter with Jesus at Mass. The Liturgy and, in fact, all the Sacraments are done with “things” like bread, wine, water, fragrance, fire, fabrics, words, sounds, silence, gestures, space, movement, action, time, and light. The Sacraments of the Church give us physical, material moments, when we can truly meet Jesus Christ.

The Pope tells us that “in the Eucharist and in all the Sacraments we are guaranteed the possibility of encountering the Lord Jesus and of having the power of his Paschal Mystery reach us.” We do not have to guess or wonder when we celebrate the Eucharist that Jesus is there, truly present. He comes to us in very real ways, actually in multiple ways at Mass. At Mass, Jesus is present in his holy Word, in the Eucharist, and in the assembly of people gathered.

May I suggest some reflection on the meaning and how it plays out in our lives, as we continue to pray for and encourage those around us who have drifted away from this beautiful and nourishing gift of receiving Jesus at Mass each week.

Why do you think the Sacraments are not celebrated with words alone? Why is it important that the Sacraments be celebrated with concrete things like water, wine, bread, oil? Does it surprise you to learn that Jesus is present in other ways beyond the Eucharist? Pray about it!

Have a blessed, prayerful, and joyful week ahead! ~~~ *Michele Hall*