

# LITURGY BYTES

## Transforming Power of the Mass



With the spread of COVID these past years, we are reminded of our limitations, vulnerability, and naturally the reality of sickness and even death. The public health emergency caused us to do things differently. As we all know, our Diocese limited the celebration of public worship in compliance with what the State mandated. It was a very unusual time for all of us.

Today I continue to think about those who are still not coming back to Mass in person. A new practice emerged from COVID with the live streaming of daily and weekend Masses. The live streaming has continued and is a blessing for so many who are in poor health. However, I still wonder about the healthy ones continuing to watch Mass at home. Is there something missing for them? Also, what about those who are very sick? How is the Mass strengthening them?

In the Eucharistic prayer, bread and wine become Christ's Body and Blood, which is brought to the sick as Communion by our Ministers of Holy Communion to the homebound. We include the sick and dying in the General Intercessions at every Mass. The full meaning of sickness and death, as well as the Church's care for the sick and dying lie in the person of Jesus. He freely embraced suffering and death. He identified with the sick and the dying and had great compassion for them. Healing the sick and the dying are among Christ's first miracles. Having heard of the Lord's healing power, people either brought the sick and dying to him or would intercede with him on their behalf. We see this in many Gospel passages in Scripture. Jesus entrusted care of the sick and the dying to the Apostles. Jesus identifies with the sick to such an extent that they become his presence in the world: **"When I was sick, you visited me."** (Matthew 25:36)

What a wonderful way to be a Eucharistic people—bringing this gift to those who are homebound because of illness or hospitalization. At the present time, our Diocese is finishing up the spring training sessions for those wishing to be Ministers of Holy Communion. If you wish to become part of this ministry, please let me know, as I would be happy to speak with you. Training does resume in the fall.

Have a safe, blessed, peaceful and healthy week ahead! ~~~~ *Michèle Hall*