

# LITURGY BYTES

## *The Mass & Jesus*



The principal focus of the liturgy is the life of Christ, the one sent by God to bring salvation to all of God's people. We come to really know who Christ is through the liturgy. Pope Francis tells us: "Jesus' whole life, his way of dealing with the poor, his actions, his integrity, his simple daily acts of generosity, and finally his complete self-giving, is precious and reveals the mystery of his divine life." (Joy of the Gospel #265)

When the Scriptures are proclaimed at Mass, it is, as the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy states, Christ who is speaking. Christ is present in his proclaimed Word, inviting us to know him and his mission for us. We also come to know Christ in the very symbols of liturgy: bread transformed into Jesus' body and wine turned into his blood. The prayers, songs, and gestures all communicate who Christ is in our midst and his desires for us.

Christ's life is larger than any one liturgical service could convey. Rather, the power of the liturgical year is that we enter into "moments" or specific events within Christ's life or that these events of Christ enter into us through our hearing, through our praying, through our singing and sharing with the community in Holy Eucharist.

Here are some examples: at Christmas, we come to know that the Son of God, who became human and dwells in our midst, enters into us through his words and at Eucharist; at Easter, we come to know that God will bring life out of death, pain, and betrayal. Over the course of the liturgical year, we grow in not only knowledge of Christ, but we grow more Christlike. So, to know what Christ is like comes principally through the liturgy. Jesus models for us God's very desires for us. Once we begin to grow in our knowledge of Christ over the course of the liturgical year, we begin to develop a liturgical spirituality. Again, the Holy Father tells us: "Christ's resurrection is not an event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated this world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force." (Joy of the Gospel #276) Because of Christ's Resurrection, and his presence to us in the liturgy through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ's entire life, his mission, begins to take hold of us. Through this transformation, we begin to see and act how God desires us to be each day.

Did you ever think that the liturgy and the liturgical seasons would have that kind of impact on each of us? Definitely something to ponder and pray about!

Have a safe, healthy, and blessed week! ~Michele Hahn