

Mark 6:30-34 - The Splendor of the Mass

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In Today's Gospel:

- The Apostles return from their first mission, they're very excited and want to share their experiences, but they are tired.
- They want to be alone by themselves, but the crowds have preceded them and want to see Jesus and Jesus' heart is filled with pity for them.
- First of all, they are hungry, so Jesus feeds the huge crowd of 5000 men, not counting women and children, with merely two fish and five loaves of bread.
- The Gospels for the next four Sundays, except on the feast of the Assumption, are from Chapt. 6 of John's gospel, known as "The Bread of Life Discourse."
- In other words, we will be preaching about the Eucharist.

- During these past 17 months of the "Covid-response," parishioners who couldn't come to Mass, either because the Church was closed, or Masses were limited or the parishioners, themselves, were very vulnerable to the virus, told me how much they missed receiving Holy Communion.
- To me, that was more than understandable.
- **Because**, If God could give us a greater gift than the Eucharist, He would, because He loves us.
- But, God can't because the Eucharist is the greatest gift, the greatest Good, because the Eucharist is God Himself.

But at the same time, during this Covid time-period, I haven't heard anyone say,

- ◆ "Oh, how I miss coming to Mass."
- ◆ Perhaps, they weren't drawing a distinction between Holy Communion and the Mass, or perhaps
- ◆ they don't truly understand the true beauty and meaning of the Mass or all that is really taking place.
- ◆ The "Big Picture" of Creation, Human history, Salvation History and Heaven are all contained in the celebration of the Mass!

In the book of Genesis, God the Father walked with Adam and Eve in the garden. When Adam and Eve committed Original Sin, they lost that privilege.

- ★ *We have the privilege back here at Mass. God the Father is truly present at this and every Mass; The entire Mass is directed to Him.*
- ★ After the Fall, the only contact man had with God was to offer burnt sacrifices to Him, to adore Him and to make an attempt at reconciliation.
- ★ *At this Mass, We Adore God, we praise Him, we thank Him for redeeming us, we express our sorrow for our sins and ask for forgiveness and offer a sacrifice to Him, a perfect and pleasing Sacrifice.*
- ★ Noah, upon landing on dry ground after the Flood, sacrificed a lamb born during the flood.
- ★ *At this Mass, the priest offers a sacrifice of the True Lamb of God, Our Savior, Jesus Christ.*
- ★ Abraham was asked by God to sacrifice his beloved son, Isaac, but God held back the knife.
- ★ *At this Mass, we are present on Calvary, where Jesus is sacrificed for us and God did not hold back the executioners.*
- ★ Moses, while at the burning bush, a voice said, "Moses, this is Holy Ground, remove your sandals."
- ★ *At Mass, we are on the Holiest of Holy Ground.*
- ★ At the Passover meal, the night before the Hebrews left Egypt, they were instructed to sacrifice a spotless lamb, place its blood on the lintels of their doors and the Angel of death would pass over their families. They were commanded to repeat this meal every year.
- ★ *The Passover Meal foreshadowed the Last Supper; the Last Supper was the Passover Meal. Jesus instructed us to "Do this in memory of Me."*

- ★ In the Sinai desert, a Pillar of cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night was the sign of God's presence
- ★ *At Mass, God is truly present, Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity.*
- ★ On Mt. Sinai, Moses could not look at God, he had to turn his back in the presence of God, and yet, when Moses came down from the mountain, he had to shield his face because it radiated such brightness that the people couldn't look at his face.
- ★ *At Mass, we can look directly at God before us and receive His Body and Blood.*
- ★ *Do our faces shine? No, but our souls do!*
- ★ In the desert, the Ark of the Covenant contained the Tablets of the Law, Aaron's staff and a portion of manna. The Ark was so holy, that it was covered to keep it from view. Furthermore, if anyone touched the Ark, they would drop dead, and they did.
- ★ *At this Mass, we become greater than the Ark of the Covenant.*
- ★ In the Temple in Jerusalem, the High Priests had to bathe and change clothes to enter the Holy of Holies and the same upon leaving.
- ★ *At this Mass, we can just walk into the Holy of Holies, How do we prepare ourselves for Mass?*
- ★ During the Babylonian Captivity - the Hebrew people yearned to return to the Temple in Jerusalem.
- ★ *Our Temple is infinitely greater than their Temple; when unable to attend, do we yearn for it.*
- ★ At the Annunciation, all the angels in heaven leaned toward Nazareth to hear Mary's answer. She answered, Yes, and the Word became Flesh.
- ★ *At this Mass, we receive the Word made flesh, Our Lord in the Eucharist.*
- ★ At Christmas, Jesus was born and was seen for the first time by a small portion of humanity.
- ★ *At this Mass, and every Mass, Jesus is present and is seen by everyone.*
- ★ During the Transfiguration, St. Peter said, "Lord, it is good for us to be here!"
- ★ *I often say those very same words while standing near the Altar and the Tabernacle.*
- ★ We don't deserve it, but It is Good!

- ★ At every Eucharistic Sacrifice, we are present at the last Supper, at the Agony in the Garden at Gethsemane, present at the Passion and Death of the Son of God made Man and we are present at His resurrection from the dead.
- ★ We do not travel through space and time. These most Holy events are timeless; we merely enter into them. How blessed we are.
- ★ Our Blessed Mother, St. Joseph, St. John the Baptist, every saint in heaven, all the angels, all our deceased relatives and friends in heaven are also present at this and every Mass.
- ★ The story of Salvation, our Story, His Story, is remembered and played out during this and every Mass being offered throughout the world.

This Church is also a body, the Mystical Body, the Mystical Body of Christ and we are its members. We are called together to this Mass by the Holy Spirit. Just imagine being drawn into Church by the inhaling of the Holy Spirit,

He is gently breathing you in, inviting you in.

As you enter, you see and associate yourself with the gifts of bread and wine in the vestibule, which you provide and they are the work of your hands; they will become the Bread of Heaven, your nourishment soon. Back to the analogy of the body:

- And just as air is moistened before going into the lungs, we bless ourselves with Holy Water - which cleanses us of our venial sins
- We gather, Mass starts and we begin by being sorry for our sins and our failings,
- We listen to **our story**, what our spiritual ancestors, all the way back to Adam and Eve, and how they hungered for the coming of the Savior.
- We sing a Psalm of joy, of sorrow, of thanksgiving or of praise. with King David.
- We listen to the words of the Apostles in the Epistles.

- We stand and listen to the Good News from Christ Himself.
- We **sit and listen as the homilist** applies the Readings of the Day to our own hungers and prepares us to enter into the sublime Mysteries of the Eucharistic Sacrifice.
- We express our beliefs in the Creed
- and pray for the relief of **the Hungers of our hearts** in the Prayer of the Faithful.
- In today's Gospel, Jesus' heart is moved with pity for the people gathered in front of Him. He sees that they are hungry but He also sees the **Hunger of their hearts.**

At the Offertory, we bring and offer Bread & Wine, the work of "Human Hands."

The bread: many hands making the bread from the gifts God has provided us: seed, soil, sunlight and water.

The wine: many hands, or feet, making wine from grapes, soil, sunlight and water provided by God.

We place our needs and desires in the chalice and on the paten. We place our hungers on the altar.

What hungers do you bring here to give to the Lord?

- Is it a just a sincere desire for heaven and the fear of hell?
- Do you want to be respected and liked by others?
- Is your spouse or your parents suffering from cancer, or are you?
- Are your parents suffering from the effects of aging?
- Have you lost someone very close to you and you miss them so much that there is a hole in your heart?
- Are you suffering from an addiction, physical or moral?
- Are you worried about your siblings or your children who have left the church? **I AM!**
- Are you or your loved ones having difficulty in their marriage or in life?
- Are you depressed?
- Are you are worried about your children, or your grandchildren, growing up in these difficult immoral times? **I AM!**
- Are you are passionately against abortion and the culture of death in our country?
- Are you are concerned about the economy and about peace? **I AM!**
- Are you **AFRAID?**
- Do you hunger for wholeness and holiness?
- Do you hunger for meaning and purpose in your life?
- Do you hunger for belonging, for connectiveness, for community, for family?
- Do you hunger to be needed?
- Do you hunger to be **LOVED?**

No matter what your hungers are,

They are real and they are big and **God wants you to bring them to Him.**

As Psalm 63 says, "*O God, you are my God, for you I long; for you my soul is thirsting. My body pines for you like a dry, weary land without water.*"

The Great News is that God has a hunger also.

He has a **great unsatisfiable hunger** for us, for loving us, for wanting us to be happy!

He said from the cross, I Thirst! When we bring our hungers, our hurts and our worries to Him, He leans in listening to us. In the Responsorial psalm (Ps. 40), it says,

I have waited, waited for the LORD, and he stooped toward me and heard my cry

He offers Himself for us, gives Himself to us, because that is who He is.

The 1st sentence in the Catechism says, ***The desire for God is written in the human heart, because man is created by God and for God; and God never ceases to draw man to himself. Only in God will he find the truth and happiness he never stops searching for:*** 27

There is an affinity between God and us. **We NEED GOD**, and

He desires and draws us to Him!

His Mother, also. She loves us, She is our mother, the Mother of the Mystical Body, us.

- **And then, After the Offertory** - just as oxygen from the lungs enters the blood stream by osmosis,
- we pass through this veil by Grace.
- We pass through this **Space-Time Portal** into the Divine, into the transcendent, to the **Last Supper**, to **Calvary**, to the **Supper of the Lamb** - to **Heaven, itself**.
- We all enter into the very bloodstream of the Church, the bloodstream of Christ's Body; we are attached to His Blood.
- Once we are in His Sacred Bloodstream we are pass through His Sacred Heart,
- We are pumped throughout His Body where we are cleansed and nourished.
- We are nourished by the **Body of Christ, Himself, the Eucharist**,
- we are in **Deep Communion** with Him
- We are in Communion with each other, with those far away, with those **who have died**, with all the saints, with all the angels.
- **All the hungers of our hearts are satisfied and we are made whole, with the Body of Christ.**
- We travel through Christ's brain and are filled with Wisdom and Knowledge, and Understanding.
- We pass again through His **Most Sacred Heart** on the way to the lungs of the Holy Spirit
- From there we are **breathed out** into the world, forgiven, nourished, refreshed and fortified with Jesus and Mary themselves, **to be them** and to bring them to others.

What we have here at this Mass, today and everyday - This is not a Sunday service.

This is a privileged point of encounter, an encounter with the Divine, and encounter between the all-loving God and His beloved creation.

A God answering the prayers and the needs and the hungers of His people.

And a Mother, who is having us home for a **Family Dinner**, listening to us and asking Her Son to take care of our needs and feeding us before sending us on our separate ways.

And as we leave, we are all reminded by the Deacon to preach the Good News.

We are reminded that we are the evangelizers to the world.

We are being called to a **New Evangelization** in the Church.

In our Evangelization, we need to help others with **their hungers**, just as the Beatitudes ask us to do.

Our Lord puts the **Beatitudes first in importance**.

We are to provide for basic human needs of others, and to encourage **them** to bring the **hungers of their hearts** to Our Lord.

Remember, when people are hungry, thirsty, cold and sick, they're not going to listen to a theological dissertation, they want to eat and be warm - first.

Now, let us turn our minds to our Creed, to our **Prayer of the Faithful**, which addresses the **Hungers of Our Hearts**,

then during the Offertory, let us bring to mind and lay all our **Hungers and Hurts** on the **Altar of Sacrifice** and at the **feet of Our Lord**, and prepare to enter **into the Greatest of All Mysteries**, into a **Taste of Heaven** which is no less than entering into **Heaven, itself, the very Life of the Holy Trinity**.