

THE TOTALITY OF LIFE BEGINS WITH THE EUCHARIST. The last Ecumenical Council of the Church,



which is the most significant convocation Christ's Church on earth can convene, was Vatican II (1962-1965). In this inspired act of the Church, the Council fathers wrote: *"Taking part in the Eucharistic sacrifice, the source and summit of the Christian life, the people offer the divine victim to God and themselves along with him."* (Lumen Gentium, #11) Through this offering of self to God and God to God, we offer true worship to the living God. Every other act or attempt at worship pales in comparison to the offering of the Eucharist. In fact, it simply cannot be held in comparison, for there is nothing to compare against God's gift of worship to man.

We were designed and created by God. Scripture teaches us: *"For it was you who created my being, knit me together in my mother's womb."* (Psalm 139:13) God made us to be one with Him, He has prepared a place for us to exist with Him forever. Jesus said to his disciples: I am indeed going to prepare a place for you, and then I shall come back and take you with me, that where I am you also may be." (John 14:3) The invitation to be with God forever, to have eternal communion with Him is realized in Eucharistic communion. Listen to the Words of Jesus at Capharnaum. *"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. 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."* (John 6:54-56) Eternal Life begins in the here and now, in the core of our being, within our hearts, as we welcome the indwelling of the Holy Trinity and enter communion with Christ.

No wonder the great Church Father, St. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon, France and co-patron of the Archdiocese of Mobile, taught that *"Man fully alive is the glory of God."* All men and women draw their life from God. God is the source of all life and we have life in as much as we draw life from the source. Therefore, the more fully, the more perfectly, the more intimately we participate in the life that is God, the more we encounter Him, the more we see Him, the more fully alive we become. There is no other way we encounter God more intimately, more perfectly and enter into a communion union with Him than when we participate in the Mass. Living, receiving, believing and adoring the Eucharistic Lord is man fully alive and that is the Glory of God on earth. The totality of life begins and ends with Eucharist. Being a Eucharistic being is to constantly encounter the living God and offer up to Him all of life. In His presence we are formed by His light, His love, His creative being from which we have our origin. Sr. Briege McKenna used the analogy of sun-tanning to explain how being in God's presence brings about a definitive effect in our lives. Just as our skin cannot help but be effected by the rays of the sun when we expose our body to it, so too is it impossible to be before the Eucharistic Lord, Jesus, the Son of God, without being affected by His Eucharistic presence. It is always a choice we make to be present to God. Yes, He draws us to Himself, but we still choose to come. We come with our minds, our hearts and our lives to Him in Eucharist. The more fully we participate and offer life in the Eucharist to God, the more fully alive we become!

Nothing blesses us more perfectly than to surrender everything to God and allow God to yoke our lives. We can constantly immerse our lives in the Eucharist. There is no more perfect and higher experience of Eucharist than participating at the Sunday Mass. All life flows out from the offering of Eucharist on every given Sunday. In effect, every Sunday is a continuation of the Easter mysteries we are preparing to celebrate during this Lenten Season. However, we are not restricted to being Eucharistic beings only on Sunday. We can offer our lives daily at Daily Mass. From the rising of the sun to its setting, a pure sacrifice of praise is being offered to God on the altars of the Church throughout the world. We are invited to celebrate Eucharist every day! Even more, we can immerse our lives and the lives of those around us and the entire world through the prayer of the Church, the Liturgy of the Hours. Each time we pray the Church's prayer, we enter into the eternal flow of the Eucharist that originates from the open side of Jesus Christ on the Cross and roars through the world as the Divine Holy Spirit. Still more, by placing our heart and mind in the Eucharist presence of the Lord, we can immerse whomever and whatever into the River of Life Giving waters by a formal act of faith, in as much as we are faithful to our own obligation to immerse our lives in the act of worship that is the Mass.

There is no limit to who we can pray for, how many we can immerse in the waters of the Eucharist. There is no end to all that can be and must be immersed in the Eucharistic life of God. The totality of life must be recapitulated in Christ, and that will only happen in and through Eucharistic worship! We all are called to become Eucharistic beings. The more we realize this truth, the more fully alive we will be and the greater the Glory of God will shine in our world, and the New Jerusalem will come from God forever.

I exhort you, good people of God and St. Bede Parishioners, offer your lives as a spiritual sacrifice to God at Mass, immerse everything in the River of Life that is the Holy Eucharist. Your life will never be the same.

..... Fr. Alejandro E. Valladares, Pastor of St. Bede