



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

2110 Broadway • Sacramento, California 95818 • 916/733-0200 • Fax 916/733-0215

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

July 16, 2021

Dear Brothers:

Please dedicate more prayerful preparation to preaching on the 17th through the 21st Sundays of Ordinary Time, July 25th – August 22nd. With the exception of Sunday, August 15th, the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, the gospel readings will guide the Church through a reflection on the sixth chapter of the gospel of John. This offers a providential moment to reflect more intently on the mystery of the Eucharist, the Bread of Life.

The Bishops of the United States have proposed a Eucharistic Revival for the Catholic community in the United States. Preparations are being made to begin the revival in 2022-23, culminating with a Eucharistic Congress in 2024-25. While plans are still being elaborated for this national pastoral initiative, I encourage all of us to begin now inviting the faithful in the Diocese of Sacramento to renew a love for the Eucharist and rekindle a desire to unite ourselves with Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus. The Sundays dedicated to the reflection on the sixth chapter of John provide a good opportunity to teach about the mystery of the Eucharist and encourage more devotion to this Most Blessed Sacrament.

Research has shown that many Catholics do not appreciate the mystery of the Eucharist. They do not grasp being present to the Lord's Last Supper and kneeling at the foot of the Lord's cross on Calvary as we offer the Mass. They do not recognize the real body and blood of the crucified Christ under the appearance of bread and wine.

Many members of our community may still be hesitant, or some may even be indifferent to returning to the Sunday Sacrifice of the Mass. The Sundays dedicated to sixth chapter of John can be an occasion for renewed outreach and catechesis.

The Eucharist also offers us the path to a greater communion of mind and heart in this fractious time for society and the Church.

I propose the following themes/topics for your reflection as we prepare to preach the sixth chapter of John.

Seventeenth Sunday (Jn. 6.1-15) July 25th – The Eucharist as the Sacrament of Charity. Jesus feeds the hungry crowd with an abundance. Jesus' generous charity to us must lead us to concrete acts of charity for others. Proposed resolution: Identify a personal act of charity for others in response to the bountiful charity Jesus offers us.

Eighteenth Sunday (Jn. 6.24-35) August 1st – The Eucharist is a personal encounter with Jesus who gives a new orientation to our life. Jesus does not intend only to take care of the physical needs of those who followed him. He desires to satisfy the deep hunger for

eternal life and mercy only found in communion with God. Jesus is the bread come down from heaven to give life to the world. Proposed resolution: Practice more intentionally the Eucharistic fast before offering the Mass. One hour is the minimum required by Church law. Consider a longer time if one is able.

Nineteenth Sunday (Jn.6.41-51) August 8th -- The Eucharist is the Body of Christ that nourishes us on the journey to heaven. Jesus is the new Moses, the Good Shepherd, who leads us to heaven and nourishes us for the journey with his own body and blood. We were made for heaven. Proposed resolution: Commit to be more involved in the parish and to invite others to participate in the parish. Pray that all may come together around the Good Shepherd.

Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Lk. 1.39-56 August 15th -- While Sunday, August 15th is the Solemnity of the Assumption, it still offers an opportunity to continue preaching on the Eucharist. Teach about connection of the Mass with the heavenly liturgy where Mary reigns as Queen. Proposed resolution: Approach the Sacrament of Penance so that our bodies and souls are more united with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the communion of saints.

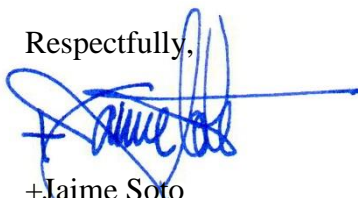
Twenty-First Sunday (Jn. 6.60-69) August 22nd – The Eucharist is a communion in the Lord's saving sacrifice of the Cross. In the Mass we unite ourselves to the sacrifice of Jesus for the remission of our sins. In the Eucharist, we die to sin so that we may live for God in Christ Jesus. In the Eucharist we join with Simon Peter in declaring, "Master, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." Proposed resolution: Support the gospel of life and reject the sins against the dignity of human life.

In my recent pastoral letter, *The Call to Holiness*, I spoke of the pastoral mission we all carry as the Diocese dedicated to the Most Blessed Sacrament: "This pastoral mission is best fulfilled when we unite ourselves more closely to the holiness of the Lord Jesus, when we join ourselves to the one holy and acceptable sacrifice of Christ offered on the cross. The blood of Christ outpoured transforms us into a holy nation, a royal priesthood consecrated to the glory of God and the sanctification of the world. This is what it means to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world."

I hope these reflections encourage you to take advantage of the timely gospel readings for renewing the understanding and love for the Eucharist among faithful as well as ourselves.

Join me in praying before the Blessed Sacrament of our Lord Jesus asking that he teach us and inspire us so that we may more worthily and joyfully unite ourselves to the one priesthood of Christ and become the instruments of his own wisdom and charity for the good of the Church.

Respectfully,



+Jaime Soto
Bishop of Sacramento