



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK
Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time: AUGUST 28-29, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

While enjoying a well-deserved break in Rome, Bishop Robert Barron recalled giving out communion at one of the papal masses in Vatican Square. The crowd was huge and the people were pressing against the wooden barricades reaching over each with hands extended. As the strong, or old or small little hands reached out, the people were calling out to him, *Padre, Padre, per favore* (Father, Father please).

For some of us, our sense of Eucharist has become so ho-hum. We have lost our sense of THIS is the Body of Christ, Food from heaven. This is not a luxury, but a necessity!

The Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium*, tells us: the Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian faith." This was reaffirmed by John Paul II who argued the church comes from Eucharist. At the Eucharist, time and eternity merge. Real communion will take place when there is sacrifice, real suffering.

At the Eucharist, sacrifice, meal and real presence are intimately connected. Grace will flow into a sometimes very dysfunctional world from this most holy sacrifice.

A PERSONAL REFLECTION:

My uncle, Father John T. Beyenka, who died January 23, 1988, was a chaplain during World War II, serving in Italy as a member of the U.S Army infantry that fought at Monte Casino and helped liberate Rome. I have pictures of him saying mass, using the hood of the jeep for the altar with young soldiers kneeling down receiving the Eucharist. His aid carefully has a paten under each chin to prevent the host from falling. On Veterans Day, November 11, 2020, the Archdiocese of Chicago put together an online photo exhibit of him during the war.

(<https://archives.archchicago.org/photo-exhibit/fr-john-beyenka>) The *Pioneer Press*, a local edition of the *Chicago Tribune* did an article about the exhibit, too. (<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/oak-park/ct-oak-veterans-day-tl-1112-20201110-qn6qkmezergl7mov6ef5rcnr4e-story.html>)



Father John T. Beyenka giving communion to the soldiers during wartime.

The young men knew full well the meaning of the Eucharist. Meal, sacrifice and real presence became vividly alive. They knew each other like no other group — who was brave, who was a leader, who had died, and how only the presence of Christ kept them alive. My uncle would tell me that some of the brightest and strongest among them died while others who were half a man of these soldiers, in terms of raw ability, made it through the most difficult times alive. It was all grace.

He and his contemporaries held to this sense of the sacredness of the mass when they returned home. The rubrics that were followed in war now were done at home (even on vacation before a round of golf in the hotel room using the motel room table for an altar), because this was no ordinary meal. This was Christ made present! I am sure they recalled all those at home and abroad who had counted on them for their daily bread and were with them today through the Eucharist, where heaven and earth is united through this sacrificial meal.

Peace,
Father Mike Meany