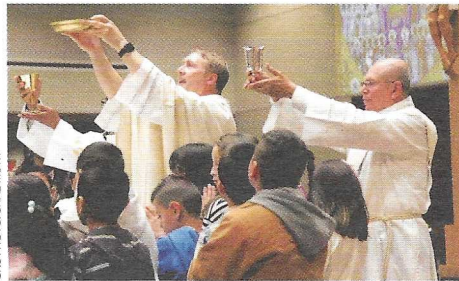


Dear Padre,

In your previous column you wrote that the Mass commemorates Jesus' Last Supper and is a thanksgiving for God's gifts to us. Are there other reasons to get out of bed early and attend Sunday Mass?

The Mass is all about giving thanks for God's forgiveness of sins and his plan for eternal life. In fact, *Eucharist* is derived from the Greek word meaning "gratitude" or "thanksgiving." But there are many other reasons to participate in the Mass.

The Mass is our opportunity to be present with our Lord in the forms of bread and wine. God doesn't usually make frightening appearances to us



accompanied by crashing thunder and lightning. Rather, he makes himself accessible to us in the humble form of food. Jesus said, "Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day" (John 6:54).

As St. Augustine put it, when we receive Christ in

these forms, we become what we receive. We are the body of Christ, not as individuals but as his Church. His Church is his physical presence on earth today, the way people come into contact with Christ.

When we participate in the Mass, we become witnesses to all of this: our liberation from sin and death; our Lord's Real Presence to us in the forms of bread and wine; and we, as Church, becoming what we receive—the body of Christ. Can there be better reasons for waking up on a Sunday morning and attending Mass?

Fr. Gary Lauenstein, CSSR / Sundaybulletin@Liguori.org

Do you have a question for the Padre?

Go to DearPadre.org to send your question and to learn more about *Dear Padre*.

A WORD FROM Pope Francis

Without Christ we are condemned to be dominated by everyday weariness, with its worries, and by fear of the future. The Sunday encounter with the Lord gives us the strength to experience the present with confidence and courage, and to go forth with hope. For this reason, we Christians go to encounter the Lord...in the Eucharistic celebration.

GENERAL AUDIENCE, DECEMBER 13, 2017

Calendar

Monday

JANUARY 24

St. Francis de Sales,
Bishop and Doctor
of the Church
2 Sm 5:1–7, 10
Mk 3:22–30

Tuesday

JANUARY 25

The Conversion of
St. Paul the Apostle
Acts 22:3–16
or Acts 9:1–22
Mk 16:15–18

Wednesday

JANUARY 26

Sts. Timothy and Titus,
Bishops
2 Tm 1:1–8 or Ti 1:1–5
Mk 4:1–20

Thursday

JANUARY 27

Weekday
2 Sm 7:18–19, 24–29
Mk 4:21–25

Friday

JANUARY 28

St. Thomas Aquinas,
Priest and Doctor
of the Church
2 Sm 11:1–4a,
5–10a, 13–17
Mk 4:26–34

Saturday

JANUARY 29

Weekday
2 Sm 12:1–7a, 10–17
Mk 4:35–41

Sunday

JANUARY 30

Fourth Sunday
in Ordinary Time
Jer 1:4–5, 17–19
1 Cor 12:31–13:13
or 13:4–13
Lk 4:21–30

