

Dear Parishioners,

Recently I was asked by a parishioner if Fr. John and I could hold the Monstrance with the Blessed Sacrament outside at a designated time while people would be able to drive by in their cars and get a glimpse of the Eucharist. Her request came from a deep longing to be in the Lord's presence. It has been difficult for many not to be able to celebrate the Mass or receive Holy Communion or come to church for Adoration. Though I would love to honor her request, I believe it is imperative we stay put in our homes to help curb the spread of this deadly and highly contagious virus. In response I shared with her the following:

For centuries the Church refrained from Eucharist on Good Friday. Here's what Pope Emeritus Benedict wrote in ***Behold the Pierced One*** (pp.97-98), Joseph Ratzinger (Benedict XVI)

"When Augustine sensed his death approaching, he 'excommunicated' himself and undertook public penance. In his last days he manifested his solidarity with the public sinners who seek for pardon and grace through the renunciation of communion. He wanted to meet his Lord in the humility of those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for him who is the Righteous and Merciful One. Against the background of his sermons and writings, which are a magnificent portrayal of the mystery of the Church as communion with the Body of Christ, and as the Body of Christ itself, built up by the Eucharist, this is a profoundly arresting gesture. The more I think of it, the more it moves me to reflection. Do we not often take the reception of the Blessed Sacrament too lightly? Might not this kind of spiritual fasting be of service, or even necessary, to deepen and renew our relationship to the Body of Christ?"

"The ancient Church had a highly expressive practice of this kind. Since apostolic times, no doubt, the fast from the Eucharist on Good Friday was a part of the Church's spirituality of communion. This renunciation of communion on one of the most sacred days of the Church's year was a particularly profound way of sharing in the Lord's Passion; it was the Bride's mourning for the lost Bridegroom (cf. Mk 2:20). Today too, I think, fasting from the Eucharist, really taken seriously and entered into, could be most meaningful..."

To be sure, we are living through an extended Good Friday and a Lent not of our choosing. I pray that it will awaken in each of us a deeper hunger for the Lord in the Eucharist. I can only imagine the euphoria we will experience once we are gathered together again at the altar of the Lord for the Sacrifice of the Mass. Hopefully that day will not be in the too distant future.

A friend of mine posted on Facebook:
You've cleared our schedules,
You've flipped our focus
You clearly have much to say, Lord.
Now, will you still our racing thoughts?
Calm our spirits?
It is noisy, Lord.
Help us to not miss Your voice.

May we all use this time to the best of our advantage, grow closer to those near and dear to us as well as to our Lord.

Fr. Lawrence