

***Twenty-First Week of Ordinary Time***  
***August 25, 2024***  
***Year of the Most Holy Eucharist***  
***Reflection #35***

*“Man will never yield to, much less be inspired by, what is no better than himself.”*  
*(John A. Kane, Transforming Your Life through the Eucharist, p.19)*

There have been many talks offered and books written concerning the plight of human suffering. As a result of their original sinful disobedience towards the rules of God, Adam, Eve and their descendants must endure some form of suffering. As we consider how our lives are affected through the proper reception (free from mortal sin) of the Eucharist, I will attempt to show how we must experience suffering if we are to receive Jesus fully present in the Eucharist.

I begin with two questions. Do you want to be transformed and become more like Jesus? Second, are you certain? Please, keep the answers to these questions in your mind as we proceed forward in our reflection.

The Catholic Church teaches how Jesus wants to give Himself fully to each person. The degree to which this can take place is never dependent upon God. It is always dependent upon us. God gives Himself fully to us ONLY to the degree we can accept Him. In essence, if our soul may be likened to a cup, then our reception of God is based upon the cup and not the amount poured or the one doing the pouring. The cup will be completely full once the pouring is complete. Never too much nor too little is how God freely gives Himself to us.

Let us return to our initial two questions. If one answered saying they want to be like Jesus, then we are unknowingly saying: “I desire to suffer!” Placing everything we have stated thus far into a pattern, we would start with this statement. A person living free of mortal sin will be more open to receive those needed graces which will continue to transform their lives more into an image of Jesus. They will become more obedient to the Father’s Divine Will. They will take their faith life seriously not wanting to commit any sins which would wound the Sacred Heart of Jesus. They desire to make their lives more like Jesus’ life. Was Jesus’ life solely one of glory, peace and prosperity? No, not in the least! His life, as we mentioned last weekend, was one of hiddenness, obedience and suffering. I want to be like Jesus; therefore, I want a life of hiddenness, obedience and suffering.

As we recall, the Eucharist is the perpetual reminder of the Sacrifice of the Cross. He offered Himself to us on the night before this sacrifice was to take place. It was not offered in a moment of peace or of glory. It was offered as a means to participate in the Sacrifice of Calvary. And, not solely Calvary alone, but every moment of Jesus’ life. We can read numerous passages where He was rejected, insulted and ignored. Even to our day, how is He still treated by those who profess to be His followers? The transforming power of the Eucharist will lead all of us to accept Good Friday as the means necessary for Easter Sunday. We will want to do as He did: to offer ourselves as a sacrifice to the Father for the sins of mankind still being committed to this day. We will echo the words of Saint Paul each time we come forward to receive the Eucharist: *“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. . .”* (Colossians 1:24 – English Standard Version).