



Pick Up: EXTRA LITURGY

This is now the final week of Lent, Holy Week. This is the quickening of the mystery of Christ, when our Savior institutes the Holy Eucharist at the Last Supper, is betrayed, abandoned, and is crucified on Good Friday. Yet, as we all know, that is not the end of the story. Death does not have the last word. Christ is the champion, the victor over death, as we celebrate his glorious resurrection on Easter Sunday. This is truly the holiest week of the year.

So how do we approach this week in the light of our ReCenter Lenten initiative? We are asking everyone to Give Up all social media (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and even those comment boxes on your favorite blog), and to Pick Up the spiritual discipline of liturgical worship. Yes, we want you to attend an extra liturgy this week, whether that is a daily Mass, the veneration of the Cross on Good Friday, or the Easter Vigil (the Catholic grand slam of Masses) or another daily Mass. And we want you to Offer Up so that our parishioners become truly faith-sharers and not spectators.

According to the Second Vatican Council, the Holy Mass “is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.” As a result, the liturgy is thus considered “a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its efficacy by the same title and to the same degree.”

What is striking about the Church’s teaching is that through our participation in the liturgy, we make manifest in our very lives “the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church.” This is why St. Paul calls all Christians to become ambassadors of Christ. We are called to grow our faith by giving it away. In the Church’s liturgical action, we are truly grafted on to Christ as branches on the True Vine.

At the same time, we must not neglect St. Paul’s teaching in the letter to the Ephesians:

...I fall on my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that Father from whom all fatherhood in heaven and on earth takes its title. May he, out of the rich treasury of his glory, strengthen you through his Spirit with a power that reaches your innermost being (3:14-16)

It is imperative that we cultivate a life of personal prayer. Liturgy is the spring from which our personal prayer is nourished and grows. As Fr. Jacques Philipe writes in his book, *Time for God*, the most certain path to holiness is fidelity to daily prayer. Let us remember that our communal liturgy and our personal prayer are the two pillars the Holy Spirit takes root in our innermost being, and thus gives us the grace to reveal the mystery of Jesus Christ and His church to our neighbor.