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Year 11, No7

Monthly Spiritual Message

July 2011-123

LOVE THE EUCHARIST

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As we progress through winter, we often have more time to reflect on our lives. This includes our spiritual life as well as our being Catholics and Franciscans.

All of us by now would have experienced some of the changes in the new translation of the Holy Mass in English. For all of us, clergy, religious and laity, we have to relearn the responses and the prayers of the Mass. Of course, for many this may be annoying, but we must be patient.

The Holy Father, continuing in the footsteps of Blessed John Paul, seeks to draw us into a greater appreciation of the importance of the Holy Mass and to be thus able to participate more intimately in the Sacred Liturgy. This was the aim of the Second Vatican Council. As Catholics and Franciscans, we are called to refresh our love for the Holy Mass and to allow Christ's redemptive grace of the Mass truly to take hold of our lives.

As Blessed Pope John Paul II stated in 1983: "By entering into the Saviour's sacrificial offering, [we] share in the victory won by Him over the evil of the world. When we are shaken by the sight of evil spreading in the universe, with all the devastation which it produces, we should not forget that such unleashing of the forces of sin is overcome by the saving power of Christ. Whenever the words of consecration are uttered in the Mass and the Body and Blood of Christ become present in the act of Sacrifice, the triumph of love over hatred, of holiness over sin, is present."

The new translation of the Mass allows us to see afresh the saving mysteries of the Mass and to offer fitting worship to God. As Franciscans, may we remember the precious legacy of our Franciscan saints and previous generations of our Franciscan family who were sustained and enriched by their great love for the Blessed Eucharist and their devotion to the Sacrifice of the Mass. Unfortunately, too many Catholics no longer have an understanding of the Holy Mass or indeed of the deposit of the Catholic Faith. Unfortunately, also liturgical abuses and erroneous liturgical practises have caused confusion and have promoted a loss of faith. There is the liturgical law, "We pray what we believe."

Our Holy Father is calling all in the Church to humbly, yet truthfully, recognize the holiness and beauty of God's redemption through the Sacred Liturgy. The Pope has sought to convey this through his example of the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

As Franciscans following in the footsteps of St Francis and St Clare, let us seek to promote our understanding of the Sacred Liturgy especially through our understanding of the Church's teaching and liturgical discipline.

Let us also rekindle our own love for the Holy Eucharist by our personal devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. One bad habit that has become too common in our Churches is the over-casual behaviour, especially the loud conversation before Mass that drowns out Christ's admonition: "My Father's House is a House of Prayer".

That is why we should be supportive of Eucharistic Adoration in our Churches, reminding us to be still before God and to know that He is with us, our Emmanuel. Jesus is truly present fully in the Blessed Sacrament. Let us go to Him, adore Him and trust in His never failing love for each of us. He is the Good Shepherd, always searching for each of us to make us His own.

As Franciscans, may we always love and defend the doctrine, the reality, the gift of the Blessed Sacrament! Our Lord Jesus Christ, who comes to us as the Bread of Life in the Mass, remains with us in the tabernacle to comfort and lead us to advance the Kingdom of His Divine Love.

May the poor, humble and merciful God who remains in the host for us, be adored and loved, especially by his Franciscan sons and daughters. So, let us be attentive to the new translation of the Mass and allow this time to rekindle our faith and love for the Holy Eucharist!

Br Louis Mary Schmid OFMConv
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**Regional Assistants are requested to distribute this Monthly Message
to all local Assistants of our Order in the Regional Fraternity.**