

The New Passover

Intro. Every week someone tells me how much they missed receiving the sacraments in the past year, whether Confession or Communion. I recently visited a local community and someone told me because of because of medical and physical issues it had been almost a year since last receiving Communion during Mass. Constraints during the past year have forced us to appreciate the importance of Eucharist; we should never take it for granted ever again.

I. The reading from Exodus took place at the Jordan River, the border of the desert and the Promised Land. The Israelites were about to cross after years of wandering in the desert. Moses reviewed the covenant agreement God made with

them and asked if they would re-commit before crossing into the Promised Land. They did. The Passover experience was and is fundamental for the Jewish people. The Egyptian captivity and march to the freedom of the Promised Land through God's intervention, is remembered and celebrated every year since then. Before leaving Egypt, the Israelites marked the doors of their houses with the blood of the Passover lamb so the plague would pass over and not harm them. Passover is also foundational to *our* celebration of the Eucharist, the sharing of the Body and Blood of Christ. We come to the same table of the Lord together with the same community of disciples and remember the Lord's sacrifice for our salvation. Instead of marking our homes with the *blood* of the lamb, we *mark ourselves* by receiving the Bread of the Lamb of God. We are not yet fully

recovered enough to receive the precious Blood of Christ. I hope it will not be too much longer before we are confident enough to do that. I pray it will not as difficult an obstacle to overcome as it was when our church re-introduced it in the nineteen sixties, several centuries after another worldwide pandemic: the Bubonic Plague. Fortunately, “we also encounter the Lord through Scripture.” [Jaime L. Waters, Professor of Catholic Studies, DePaul University, Chicago, *America* magazine, June, 2021] The Presence of God in Scripture is something we can carry with us always, even when we can’t receive the Eucharist.

Concl. As we recover from this year, I believe like our Jewish sisters and brothers, we need to remember our experiences of the Lord’s Supper and *not pass over* a chance to be at Mass and receive the

Body and Blood of Christ. Some people still aren’t able to receive due to illness or infirmity. With caution, I hope we can resume bringing Communion to people who can’t get to church. Those of us who *are* able to get to church, should. Recently an elder asked me why anyone who has known the joy, power and grace of receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, could ever give that up as easily as some people he knows. I had no answer. May we never give up receiving the Body and Blood of Christ easily.

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

Corpus Christi Sunday, June 6, 2021