



## ***Parish Discernment Session #3***

# **The Real Presence of Christ**

**Focusing Question:** How can we create a culture of encounter with Jesus in our parish?

### **I. Opening Prayer (20 minutes)**

#### ***Lectio divina with John 6:51-58***

Jesus said to the Jewish crowds: “I am the living bread that came down from heaven; whoever eats this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.”

The Jews quarreled among themselves, saying, “How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” Jesus said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Unlike your ancestors who ate and still died, whoever eats this bread will live forever.”

*Was there a word or phrase or image that stood out to you?*

*What insights did you have during your meditation?*

*What graces did you receive during your meditation (for example: joy, hope, longing, contrition, etc.)?*

## **II. Introductory Comments (10 minutes)**

### **A Message from Bishop Berg**

I wish that I could be there with you. I wish that I could see you and speak with you, and I look forward to the day when I will be there with you again. I am constantly aware of my communion with you as your bishop, the apostolic manifestation of communion for the diocese. It is important to be in each other's presence, to spend time together, to speak of what has been and of what is to come, to pray with and for one another, and I look forward to the day when I will be able to do these things with you again in the near future. I am today with you in the spirit.

For, however distant we are from one another, we are united in Christ. This is the great mystery of the Eucharist: Jesus is always with us. Our God, making Himself vulnerable once more, places Himself in our hands. Our God, knowing our need for Him, comes to heal us and to nourish us and to bring us abundant life, eternal life.

Every time we participate in Mass and every time we come to adoration we encounter the living God. We encounter Our Lord and Savior. We encounter the healing love and mercy of God. We encounter Jesus. He did not just walk the earth 2,000 years ago. He comes to us now so that we may have an encounter with Him that heals and changes us, that redirects us to our true dignity and our true destiny.

As we move forward more deeply into Eucharistic Revival, let us recognize and appreciate the gift we have in the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Let us recognize Him in the Scriptures and in the homily. Let us recognize Him in the priest and in the people gathered in His name. Let us recognize Him in the poor and in the suffering. Most especially, though, let us recognize Him truly, really, and substantially present in the Eucharistic species, and, as we receive Him in Holy Communion, let us be transformed by His love and go forth to take that love to others that they may encounter Him, too.

In this Parish Discernment Session, you will be listening as the Body of Christ for the guidance of His Spirit on the question of how you as a parish can create a culture of encounter with Jesus Christ. This is at the core of what our parishes are meant to be. They are meant to be places where people encounter Jesus Christ and are transformed by that encounter. I urge you, therefore, to be attentive to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, listening for His voice in your prayer and discussions, so that your parish may become even more a place of encounter with Jesus. As you move forward into this prayer and discussion, know that my prayers are with you today as is Our Lord, Jesus Christ.

### **Points to Remember**

- No one of us has all the answers.
- God has the answers.
- God speaks through His people.
- Discussion based in prayer is a means of hearing God's will.
- Do not be attached to your own opinion.
- Look with charity on the thoughts and opinions of others and assume that we are all wanting something good.



#### **IV. Discussion and Conclusions (60 minutes)**

##### **A. Small Group Discussion (20 minutes)**

1. Where is Jesus present in our parish?
  
2. What are some ways in which we could be more intentional about creating opportunities for encounter with Jesus?
  
3. In keeping with the Little Way (doing little things with great love), what one action is God prompting *me* to do that will help to create a culture of encounter with Him?

##### **B. Large Group Synthesis (40 minutes)**

1. What holy desires can we see in these responses?
  
- 2.. What one step will we take to help create a culture of encounter with Jesus?

#### **V. Follow-up plan (20 minutes)**

- A. This is how we will be sorting through this information:
  
- B. This is how and when you can expect to hear more from us in response to what is in your input:
  
- C. Who is in charge of inviting others into this discussion?
  
- D. How will others be invited into this discussion?

## **VI. Praise and Thanksgiving**

### **A. Divine Mercy Chaplet**

*Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet as normal but with the following prayers preceding the appropriate decade.*

**1. First Decade:** Heavenly Father, through Your Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, we ask for Your mercy upon our clergy, *(name your pastor, other priests, and deacons)*.

*For each decade:*

*V.* Eternal Father, we offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ

*R.* in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

*(x10) V.* For the sake of His sorrowful Passion

*R.* have mercy on us and on the whole world.

**2. Second Decade:** Heavenly Father, through Your Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, we ask for Your mercy upon all the parishioners of our parish, *(name your parish)*.

**3. Third Decade:** Heavenly Father, through Your Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, we ask for Your mercy upon those in our parish who have fallen away from the practice of their Faith.

**4. Fourth Decade:** Heavenly Father, through Your Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, we ask for Your mercy upon all who live within our parish boundaries.

**5. Fifth Decade:** Heavenly Father, through Your Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, we ask for the mercy of increased recognition and appreciation of the presence of Jesus and of openness to encounters with Jesus.

### **B. "Conversational" style prayer of thanksgiving for one another**

*Those who are prompted may offer aloud a prayer of thanksgiving for others.*

### **C. A Prayer for Eucharistic Revival**

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who promised to stay with us always, until the end of the age. Reawaken our wonder at His presence in the Most Holy Eucharist. May our hearts burn within us as He opens the Scriptures and breaks the bread. Give us the eyes of faith to recognize His presence in our brothers and sisters, especially in the face of the poor and the suffering. Nourished by the Eucharist, send us forth to walk faithfully as missionary disciples, proclaiming the Gospel to every heart and extending Your kingdom to every land. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## **Eucharistic Revival Parish Discernment Sessions Overview**

### **Session #1**

- **Eucharistic Revival Theme:** Communion
- **Main Topic for Discussion:** How can we enhance communion between pastor and parishioners in our parish?
- This session to be facilitated by representatives from the diocesan team. Subsequent sessions to be facilitated at the local level.

### **Session #2**

- **Eucharistic Revival Theme:** Thanksgiving
- **Main Topic for Discussion:** How can we thankfully move forward as a parish in the gifts we have instead of focusing most of our attention on what we lack?

### **Session #3**

- **Eucharistic Revival Theme:** The Real Presence of Christ
- **Main Topic for Discussion:** How can we create a culture of encounter with Jesus in our parish?

### **Session #4**

- **Eucharistic Revival Theme:** Food for the Journey
- **Main Topic for Discussion:** How can we help the young adults in our community find the food they need for their journey in Christ and the Church?

### **Session #5**

- **Eucharistic Revival Theme:** The Sacrifice of Christ
- **Main Topic for Discussion:** How can we more fruitfully help our elderly, sick, and homebound be supported and contribute to the mission of the parish?

### **Session #6**

- **Eucharistic Revival Theme:** Transformation in Christ
- **Main Topic for Discussion:** What can we do to help our children be transformed by their preparation for and reception of the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion, and Confirmation so that they want to continue to grow in their Faith?

### **Session #7**

- **Eucharistic Revival Theme:** Conversion
- **Main Topic for Discussion:** How can we support each other in growing in holiness through authentic spiritual friendships?

### **Session #8**

- **Eucharistic Revival Theme:** Sent Forth
- **Main Topic for Discussion:** How can we help those we love come back to the Church, and how can we reach out in love to the marginalized?

***The session handouts for these sessions will be made available approximately every two months, beginning in January, 2023.***