

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



THE CATHOLIC "GOLD" ...

The story is told of Mister Muldoon who lived alone in the Irish countryside with only a pet dog for company. Well, one day, the dog died, and Muldoon went to the parish priest and asked, "Father, me dog is dead. Could you be saying a mass for the poor creature?" Father Patrick replied, "Oh, I'm afraid not! We cannot have masses for an animal in the Church. But you know there are some Protestants down the block there and there's no telling what they believe. Maybe they'll do something for the poor creature."

Muldoon said, "I'll go right away Father. Do you think that \$5,000 is enough to donate to them for the service?" Father Patrick exclaimed. "Sweet Mother Mary! Why didn't you tell me that the dog was Catholic?" Well, a little humor always helps! Now there is one thing that we Catholics should always take seriously and that is the Holy Mass. It is the greatest treasure that we have on this earth.

This Sunday we celebrate the great Feast of Corpus Christi—that is Latin for the Body and Blood of Christ. On this day, we commemorate the great Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist which was instituted by our Blessed Lord at the last supper. In the gospel for the feast, we read of that wonderful meal in which all of us would have liked to have been present—The Last Supper.

At the supper, Jesus took a piece of bread and said the words, "Take it; this is my body." Then afterwards, he took the sacred cup of wine and said, "This is my blood which will be shed for you and for many..." Then he told his apostles to do what he did as a perpetual memorial of his presence. And the Catholic Church, through her priests, does exactly that at every Mass that is celebrated throughout the world—whether that be at the great Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome or in the smallest wayside chapel.

Yes, we do what Jesus did—so much so that the priest at every eucharist stands "In Persona Christi" in the very person of Christ as he offers the Holy Sacrifice! It's no secret that today a good number of Catholics don't attend Mass anymore. Many of us within the Church often ask the question why they don't come. I would suggest one reason is the loss of the sense of mystery and sacredness within the Holy Liturgy. We need to remember that it is God who comes down on the altar through the ministration of an unworthy priest.

In this regard, some people like to call the rectory and ask for the names of specific priests who will be offering Mass. That's ok but it can be embarrassing. In my first parish up in Scarsdale, New York, we had an extremely popular visiting priest by the name of Monsignor William B. Smith. Many parishioners would call wanting to know what time he was offering Mass on Sunday.

One late Saturday night the pastor got a call from a rich lady in the parish requesting to know what Mass Monsignor Smith was saying. Then recognizing the pastor's voice on the phone she quickly added, "Or yourself!" Not everybody gets out of difficulty so fast!

How silly all this is. We go to Mass not for the priest but rather to receive Jesus Christ himself in Holy Communion, the greatest gift that can be offered to us in this life. On this Sunday dedicated to the Holy Eucharist let us "thank God" for that gift and for His sacred presence among us!

Sincerely in Christ,
Father Jerome