

Homily: 3rd Sunday of Lent: Cycle C: 2022: Ex 3: 1-8, 13-15; Ps 103; 1 Corth 10: 1-6,
10-12; Lk 13: 1-9

“Entering more profoundly into the Mystery of the Holy Mass”

1. As Moses today encounters God in the mystery of the “burning bush” that continues to burn but is not consumed, so **we as Catholics encounter God in the mystery of the Sacrifice of the Mass.** The Mass is the one place on earth which is a **direct** encounter with Heaven. At every Mass we mysteriously encounter the all holy Triune God, which is why it is called by the Second Vatican Council: **the source and summit of our Faith as Catholics.** *Mass makes present in a mystical, unbloody, but real way the one eternal Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross and applies the graces Jesus won for us there: to all the living and the deceased souls who are now in Purgatory. How much those of us still living on earth benefit spiritually from these graces depends on our dispositions of heart and soul.* Holy Mass is also the one place on earth where we are truly drawn together as a Community of Faith as the Mystical Body of Christ and share in the communion of God, literally in a sacrificial meal. **The Mass is the most perfect prayer.** What an awesome reality! It also shows why **we need to do our part to promote vocations to the ordained priesthood** because without a priest we do not have the Mass. That is amazing! Do we thank God for the gift of the priesthood and pray for priests daily? Please do so! Jesus utilizes us frail human priestly instruments to confect or make present in REALITY His one eternal sacrifice on the Cross at every Mass for the salvation of sinners. Do we thank God on a daily basis for this gift of the Mass, or do we kind of take it for granted?
2. **Do we find Mass boring?** Remember we only get out of Mass what we put into it! The **big question** is: *when we come to Mass are we prepared interiorly to enter into the mystery of the Mass, before, during and after the Sacrifice of the Mass is offered?!* **Let’s start with our preparation before Mass.** *Do we pray on the way to Church? Do we try to get here early in order to quiet our minds down to really enter into the mode of prayer? Do we always observe the one hour Eucharistic fast (no gum or candy) to prepare our soul to receive the Lord of the*

universe by this minimal act of self-denial? Do we go regularly to the Sacrament of Confession to make sure that we **NEVER** receive our Blessed Lord in the state of mortal sin? These are the essential steps of spiritual preparation - before we even step into the doors of the Church. **Once we come into the Church, how do we enter into this Sacred Mystery when we are here?** Well, **during** Mass *do we focus to the best of our ability and truly enter into the Mass interiorly: consciously to say the prayers, the responses, the songs, listen to the readings and homily attentively, and allow the Holy Spirit to draw our hearts to a sense of awe at the moment of the Consecration, when the bread and wine are transformed into the Body and Blood of Christ? OR are we daydreaming, looking at our nails, at the people around us, whispering to our neighbor, thumbing through the missalette?*☺ **Yes we are weak and sometimes it is hard to focus:** depending on how we feel, what is going on in our lives outside of Church, etc., *BUT the Holy Spirit will help us to do better, if we ask Him in humility and love.* What a beautiful thing to work on this Lent! **Finally** if we are properly spiritually disposed and able to receive the Lord in Holy Communion, to prepare our soul by asking our Lady to help you do so with by praying a ***Hail Mary*** in the Communion line. We can do the same for a spiritual communion, if we are not able to receive actual Communion today, and/or coming up for a spiritual blessing – just cross your arms when you come up, or put you hand to your lips, to let me know just to give you a blessing. Then after we receive the Lord in Holy Communion we are called to make a prolonged Thanksgiving for this great mystery of receiving His very Body and Blood - which is why I pause for a few minutes to pray after I purify the Sacred Vessels at the Altar.

3. **What are we to do when we are getting ready to depart from Holy Mass?** *To try to keep a profound reverential silence both interiorly and exteriorly in the Church since we truly are not only stepping on Holy ground like Moses, but have received the God of the universe into our very hearts and souls.* Remember to do your best especially now that the weather is getting nicer to keep a spirit of holy quiet while leaving the Church and to wait until you get outside to talk to your

fellow parishioners. *How we need to thank God for having participated in the Holy Mass; and after we leave the Church, to continue a spirit of ongoing prayer for the gift of being able to participate in the Mass, and to ask Him to help us to be good witnesses to our Catholic Faith throughout the week.* After all, the word **Mass** is tied in with the word **Mission** – to go forth and spread the Catholic Faith to others in the world, by all that we say and do; hence the priest says: ***go forth in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.*** All of us, until the day we die, can grow deeper in our appreciation for the Mass which is the source and summit of our Faith. **May the Lord help each one of us to grow spiritually through the Mass, on a daily basis if possible, to love Him more and more profoundly, and give ever more generous loving service to our neighbor from the graces of salvation and holiness we receive at each Mass.** Remember while good to do, as we are called to pray always and everywhere we are, you can't get these graces praying in the woods - it's only at Mass! And watching Mass at home on TV and then making a spiritual Communion is good, if you are impaired by serious health issues, but it is not the same as being at actual Mass – contrary to what some Catholics, who are not impaired by serious health issues, have sadly settled for in light of the past few years of the Covid situation; if we know anyone in that situation we need to tell them in real charity that they need to get back to actual Mass, and make a good Confession before receiving Holy Communion. To quote St. John Vianney, the patron saint of priests, *"If we understood the true value of the Mass, we would die of love; and at the end of our lives we will finally see the true eternal value of the Mass and wish we had participated with more reverence and love, and come more often than Sunday and the Holy Days of obligation."* Well, you and I have the chance to do that now; let's not wait until we die and it is too late, like the barren fig tree in the Gospel. May we bear spiritual fruit now and even more so going forward - *by loving the Mass and allowing the Lord Jesus to transform us spiritually in holiness through His One Eternal Sacrifice made present at each Holy Mass celebrated until He comes in glory someday in the future.* God bless you.