



## SAINT JOHN FISHER PARISH

July 15, 2021

Dear Parishioners:

There has been a lot of discussion lately about one of the most sacred traditions of our Catholic Faith, the Sacrament of the Eucharist. It saddens me to see it become the center of political discussion. During this past year, the pandemic deprived many of you from receiving the Eucharist. For those who were participating at Mass through livestream, I offered you the Eucharist for 20-25 minutes after Mass, to give you the opportunity to receive this spiritual nourishment. What is special about this blessed Sacrament is that we are not just receiving a blessed bread; we are receiving the very body and blood of Christ present under the appearance of bread. As Jesus says in chapter 6 of John's Gospel: "My flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink." We sometimes use the term the "real presence." What happens at Mass when the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ is not a miracle; it is a mystery, the mystery of our faith.

Despite what some polls allege about the lack of Catholic belief in the Eucharist, my own experience as a priest of 51 years, a pastor of 34 years, religious educator, and even a trainer of hundreds of religion teachers over the years tells me that Catholics do believe in this real presence. When I have given First Communion to thousands of children over the years, I have no doubt that they knew what they were receiving. When I make a visit to our Chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, I am so moved when I see the devotion people show to the Eucharist.

Now that the pandemic is beginning to wane as most people have been vaccinated, it is so delightful to see so many of you returning to Mass to take part in the Eucharist. Now that masks are no longer required for the vaccinated, I am happy that you can see my smile greeting you and I can see yours as you return to church to celebrate the Eucharist.

On the last weekend of June, Archbishop Gomez asked that the priests read his letter to all of you concerning a Holy Year in our Archdiocese commemorating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Mission San Gabriel. This marked the arrival of the Catholic faith to our area, long before California was a state. This jubilee year begins the weekend of September 11-12. Providentially, on that same weekend, we want to celebrate our coming out of this pandemic. Our parish team is planning a weekend of welcome activities to gather us together in faith and community. The team is already planning to make this very special and celebratory. Please look for information in the bulletin and parish website for a weekend of activities involving food, music, and fun for all the family. Its success will depend on the concerted efforts of many volunteers. If you are interested in helping with these events, please contact the parish office.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. David A. Sork  
Pastor