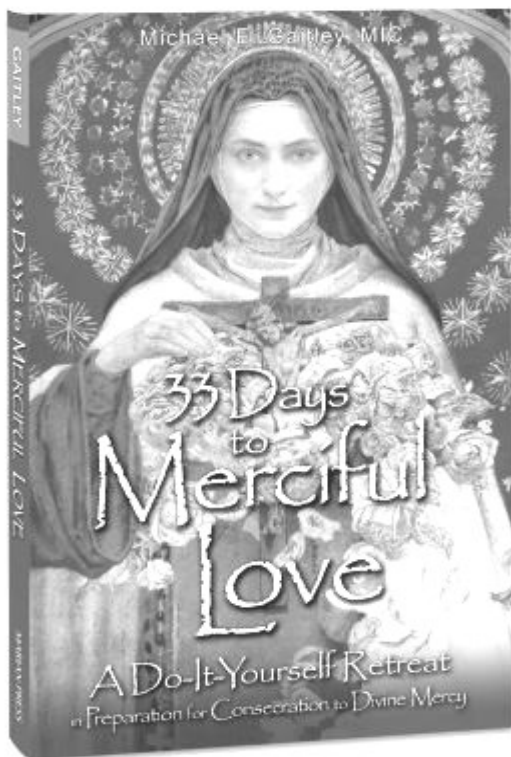


Have you received your book?

33 Days to Merciful Love

***A Do-It-Yourself Retreat in Preparation for
Consecration to Divine Mercy***



By Fr. Michael Gaitley, Marian Fathers

Each registered family of the parish was mailed a copy of the book, *33 Days to Merciful Love*, as part of our continued efforts to prayerfully participate in this Jubilee Year of Mercy. Beginning on March 1st, individuals and families are invited to use this book as a guide for 33 days of daily reflection and prayer in preparation for consecration to Divine Mercy. Using this book, we will journey together with one of the most beloved saints of modern times, St. Thérèse of Lisieux and conclude with the consecration on Divine Mercy Sunday.

33 Days to Merciful Love invites us to make a consecration to Divine Mercy using St. Thérèse's Offering to Merciful Love as our model. To consecrate oneself is to be set apart for God. The Consecration to Divine Mercy "is a self-offering . . . for the specific purpose of *glorifying God's mercy*."

St. Thérèse was declared a Doctor of the Church by St. John Paul II because she developed a specific spirituality that is recognized as something new and important for the Church in our time. This book shares her profound insights on the merciful love of Jesus and His desire to pour out His merciful love on all sinners. Her approach is easily accessible to all using her spiritual teaching of the Little Way crowning our path to holiness.

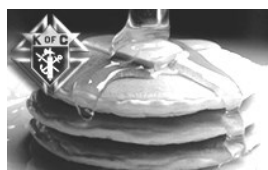
Together, lets live the extraordinary "Jubilee Year of Mercy" to the full!

Celebrating St. Patrick!



For members of St. Patrick parish, St. Patrick's day is a liturgical Feast of the rank of solemnity. Join us on March 17th after a special 6:30pm Mass. We will honor Saint Patrick together with Irish music, singing and dancing. Light appetizers and Irish beer provided. Please join us!

Help is Needed to Celebrate Our Parish Feast Day



The Knights of Columbus will be hosting a breakfast on March 13th in honor of our patron saint, St. Patrick.

Men of the parish please consider volunteering to help prepare the breakfast and serve your fellow parishioners.

Please contact:
Gene Wierzgac at 734-973-1790 / ejwierzgac@att.net
or sign up to help out at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/10963-pancake-31216>.

Christians Are Eucharistians!

The Eucharist shows us who God is and who we are supposed to be.

The sixth chapter of the Gospel of John contains Christ's first teaching on the Eucharist and is the Scriptures' most fulsome statement about this preeminent gift. Certainly there are other places where the Bible refers to the Blessed Sacrament, but John 6 is the most extensive.

The report of John 6 tells of things that happen the year before the Last Supper and the death and resurrection of the Lord. Here, Jesus seems to be so eager to describe the great gift He is going to make of himself, that He proclaims this sacramental sharing of His Body and Blood in the anticipatory Passover a whole year before He actually consummates His sacrifice.

If we study John 6 very carefully, we perceive the definite and insistent character of the Lord's assertions. "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you". (v.53) It must have been a disappointment to have all these hundreds or perhaps even thousands of people abandon Him. Jesus makes belief in His claim a condition for following him. He turns to his disciples and says, "Do you also wish to go away?" (v.67)

Christ requires His followers to believe in the Eucharist. Christians are Eucharistians!

I say Christians are Eucharistians because the Eucharist is really at the heart of what we believe. This teaching on **the Eucharist is not just another doctrine but is of the very essence of God's revelation.** St. Irenaeus is quoted in the Catechism (1327). "Our way of thinking is attuned to the Eucharist, and the Eucharist confirms our way of thinking."

The Eucharist contains and refers to the Incarnation of our Lord as well as the faith we have in the Church as the Body of Christ literally made One by our participation in Christ's life and

how we live it.

First, we are only able to have the Eucharist because of the Incarnation which is the miracle of God becoming a man, assuming

flesh and blood in time and space. The Eucharist is a seemingly infinite extension of His flesh which is *able* to be extended because of the Lord's infinitude and power. The Lord is capable of giving himself to us this way because He is God.

In the Eucharist, God is humble in power, generous, vulnerable and patiently present. He is giving us an example. Furthermore, in the very act of us receiving hierarchically — receiving the Eucharist from an ordained minister — we live that very reality of *receiving* the Eucharist from the Lord Himself by His authority. Then we are to imitate the manner of the giving of His whole self to us. God wants us to give ourselves totally and humbly to each other to strengthen the other. This whole process of receiving from God and passing on what we receive is to be repeated in everything we do.

The Eucharist characterizes the way the Lord acts toward us and what He expects of us.

Secondly, the Eucharist affirms our divinely communal reality. We are the Body of Christ not because we say so, but because *Jesus* makes it so. Jesus is the one who makes us His Body very actively and deliberately. We have unity not as a consequence of our merely believing in the Lord. The reality of the Church is not merely a *subjective* reality that we live in our hearts. We couldn't rely on ourselves to sustain such a comprehensive goodness as is the Church.

The Eucharist is the *objective* bond that Jesus establishes between each of His followers in order to unite them in His divine Existence. We share in His very Be-ing. We are united in His Body, we share His Blood as the power which characterizes the kind of love — *the servant love* — we live!

The Eucharist comes to us in the

phenomena of plain things; the appearances of bread and wine for example. This reflects the plainness of God coming to us as a man.

The Eucharist comes to us organically, if I may, it comes among us as a family, with our own "hierarchy". This also is consistent with how God has chosen to work in history. He chooses to work with and in and through His creation. God doesn't force His power on His creation. He cultivates a cooperation with his creatures — with us — so that we also have a part in His plan to redeem. All these things are the Eucharistic dimensions of the Church. The cooperation God seeks is because of God's gentleness and the respect He has for human nature. But we can only live up to the respect God has for us if we open our hearts to Him.

This is how important the Eucharist is: it summarizes and embodies our knowledge of God and His plan of salvation. It is also the grace we are given here and now, to be united to Christ and each other! **The Eucharist is everything to us and of course it would be because the Eucharist is, mysteriously, Jesus Himself.**

When we pray in the Presence of the Eucharist, we sometimes *feel* the light of the Lord pouring into our soul. We can sense in our soul the truth of the famous paragraph from *Gaudium et Spes* (22): "The truth is that only in the mystery of the incarnate

The Eucharist characterizes the way the Lord acts toward us and what He expects of us.

Word does the mystery of man take on light. For Adam, the first man, was a figure of Him Who was to come, namely Christ the Lord. Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals man to man himself and makes his supreme calling clear."

It's true that if I use the word Eucharistian, I am choosing to identify with a particular dimension of God's revelation. But at least as a kind of holy novelty (if there could be such a thing), it is valuable to consider for that very reason. This term consolidates our beliefs, it hones the declaration of our identity and distinguishes us among other kinds of Christians.

I hope that you will at least occasionally think of yourself as a Eucharistian! — *Peace!* — Fr. Gerald