

From the Pastor's Desk:

As I write this piece for the bulletin, I realize that January will be almost two thirds of the way completed when you read it and it gives me a new sense of urgency when it comes to the turn of phrase *tempus fugit*, “time flies.” Indeed, we pass so much of our time fixated upon tasks that are to be completed and deadlines that are to be met, all of which are sources of great anxiety for many of us. We become so busy with things that while they are not inconsequential, they are not ordered to higher realities that should really occupy much more of our reflective existence. We do not allow ourselves the time, that is moments of opportunity to reflect upon questions that should really consume more of our attention than they ordinarily do. I would like to pose one of those questions to you for your reflection, hopefully for your spiritual edification and not to thrust any unnecessary feeling of guilt. Please answer with rigorous honesty. What I am doing, is asking you to go deep into your heart and ask yourself the following question before God: Why do you come together with the community to pray on Sunday (or Saturday night for that matter)? In essence, **why do you come to Church?**

Allow me to assist you with your reflection? Do you come to Church freely, or out of a sense of obligation? If you chose the former, which I am assuming most of you did: Do you participate in Mass? Do you listen attentively to the readings, that is, enough to remember them after Mass is over? Do you listen actively to the homily? Do you find a message therein that you can take to heart and in some way apply to your daily life? Do you listen to the announcements (and granted I will admit that sometimes they are difficult to hear)? Are you aware of what is going on in the life of your parish? Do you sing the songs – or at least attempt to do so? If you claim that you cannot sing, do you at least follow along in the missalette, acknowledging that the theological theme of the present Eucharist is being played out lyrically in the hymns and songs? When you say Amen, are you fully aware and do you believe that you are receiving the body and blood of the Lord? Are you aware that your participation affects my disposition when I celebrate Mass? Are you aware that your participation reflects upon me as a presider? When you are asked to pray in unison with the rest of the assembly (such as, for example, singing the communion hymn at the appropriate time, with the rest of the community, and praying privately afterward) do you conform for uniformity, or do you resist because of habit or personal preference? Do you observe periods of appropriate silence? Do you contribute reasonably, truly according to your means, and in a manner that reflects the importance of God in

your life? In essence, is this saving meal, the Eucharistic banquet as important as all the special meals that you celebrate with family and friends? I think that ordinary time is an opportune moment to reflect upon these realities and perhaps to adjust some priorities that the Lord is calling **US** to. Yes, I too need to be converted as I approach the Eucharist, for as I do give my all to be fully present and conscious to the most important prayerful moment of my day, I do fall short at times and need to ask God to purify my heart and strengthen my resolve to become a truly Eucharistic person. Join me, I humbly ask you, to make this “ordinary time” an opportunity of a lifetime for spiritual growth and renewal. May it be part of your pilgrimage of hope this Jubilee Year of 2025! Ask yourself today: ***Why do I come to Church?*** Indeed, *tempus fugit*: however, it does not have to pass us by completely without taking advantage of the tremendous opportunities that it affords us.

If you did not have the opportunity to give to the second collection for the victims of the California wildfires, we will be happy to forward your donation if you place it in the collection next week. Also, I am currently working with the director of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Los Angeles to help with the alleviation of the suffering by responding to the needs of people his diocese, as a result of unforeseen and devastating infernos, by making it part of our commitment to Jubilee Corporal Works of Mercy throughout the Jubilee Year. More information will become available to you once I receive it from him. Thank you for your willingness to commit to this and other well intended projects of mercy and compassion that the parish will be introducing during the Jubilee Year.

Although I went to great lengths to explain the plenary indulgences associated with acts of pious pilgrimage during the Jubilee Year, especially those associated with the visitation to the Holy Site Churches named by Bishop Mark, individuals have continued to come to me to ask whether there is any other way to gain a plenary indulgence during the Jubilee Year. As a result, I am directing your attention to the document: **Decree on the Granting of Indulgence during the Ordinary Jubilee Year 2025 called by His Holiness Pope Francis** that may be accessed by accessing the internet site at:

https://www.usccb.org/resources/Indulgence_Vatican_Bollettino.pdf. If you are unable to access this document, please contact the parish secretary and she will be happy to print a copy for you. Please take advantage of these tremendous opportunities to gain a plenary indulgence during the Jubilee Year 2025. If you have any further questions you can direct them to me. Fr. John