

NEWS FROM The Inland See

December 24–30, 2022

FOR THE DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON



The Eucharist as sacrifice

The Year of the Eucharist has been celebrated this year in the Diocese of Burlington with a particular emphasis on the various truths of the Eucharist: the Eucharist as Communion, as Worship and as Real Presence. All of this will continue over the next two years as the Catholic Church in the United States continues its celebration of the Eucharistic Revival which was begun last June on the Feast of Corpus Christi. Much will follow in our own Diocese as well as we strive to grow in our love for and knowledge of the Eucharist, the summit and font of all of the Church's actions.

Thus, it is timely for us during this Christmas season to focus on a further significant truth of the Eucharist, namely the Eucharist as sacrifice. While we revel in the nativity stories found in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew and the joy of the birth of the Son of God made man, we also recall that God sent His Son into the world to suffer and die for our salvation. Many Christian saints and teachers have evoked a metaphorical connection between the wood of the manger, in which the child Jesus was laid, and the wood of the Cross upon which Jesus died. Recall, if you will, the haunting words of the Christmas song, *I Wonder as I Wander*:

*I wonder as I wander,
Out under the sky
Why Jesus our Savior
Did come for to die
For poor ordinary people
Like you and like I
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.*

Jesus' whole life was directed toward the sacrifice He was to make on the cross for our sake and the sake of all the world. But He also spoke continually of the coming of God's Kingdom that would be initiated through His death and resurrection and continued in His Church. All of us who are baptized in Christ are initiated into His death and resurrection and born to new life in the Church. This participation in the mission of the Church is carried out by each of us according to our vocation in the Church — laity, religious and ordained.

When we gather for the celebration of the sacrifice of the Mass, we join all of the sacrifices of our own lives for the sake of others and the Church and offer them with bread and wine as we lift up our hearts in praise and thanksgiving. The fullness of the Eucharistic celebration sustains and nourishes us further to leave the Mass to go forth "spreading the Good News by our lives."

Merry Christmas.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Christopher J. Coyne

The Most Reverend Christopher J. Coyne
Bishop of Burlington



ROMAN CATHOLIC
DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON