

When the first Sunday of Advent comes around this November, we will be using a new translation of the *Roman Missal* for the celebration of the Eucharist. The *Roman Missal* is the prayer book the priest uses to celebrate Mass. It includes the prayers the priest says as well as the people's responses. This new translation will mean many of those prayers and responses will change. Over the next two issues of *News from the Pews* I will talk about why there is a new translation of the *Roman Missal* and then I will discuss some of the changed responses the congregation will be using.

For this column I wanted begin this series by talking about the importance of liturgy in general. The word liturgy means "work of the people." This work is essential to our identity as Christian disciples. Christ asks His disciples to bring His presence to the world and that is accomplished through liturgy. Christ asks that His disciples be the channel through which His grace, mercy and love flow to the world and this occurs most especially through our liturgy. Jesus also asks His disciples to respond to God's gift of love ("For God so loved the world that He sent His Son...") and the liturgy allows us to do this.

Finally as Christian disciples we are asked to acknowledge that every good gift we have comes from God and we should give thanks for them. The great liturgy of our church, the Eucharist (the word is Greek for thanksgiving), has the central theme of giving thanks. Even more than giving thanks, we participate in the sacrifice of God's Son at every celebration of the Eucharist. Thus this "work of the people" renews us, sustains us and ultimately forms us into Christian disciples.

It is for all of the above reasons that liturgy in general and the Eucharist in particular is the most important thing we do in our life because it is an expression of who we are: children of the living God, disciples of our savior Jesus Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit.

God bless, Fr. Joe