

Deferred living.  
Is that what has been our lot these pandemic months?  
“We will be able to open when ... 70% ... 80% ... are vaccinated.  
Then we can get back to living.”  
Until then it is on hold –  
Even holding our parents and family is “on hold”.  
First it was the virus that prevented us from “living” ...  
Now it is not taking the vaccine that prevents us from living.  
No – now it is *people* who do not take the vaccine that “prevent us” from living.

And so the Divider and the Liar  
has left another scorched earth where community once was:  
Virus is not the threat ... People are the threat.

And the sides are drawn:  
Those who accept  
Those who reject  
Seeing the others as enemies  
Who “prevent us” from living fully ...  
And the true Enemy laughs in our  
Divided Living.



Pentecost.  
A fear-filled community  
The air filled with recriminations.  
“How do we get back to living”

Jesus comes breathing fire of forgiveness  
There is no “going back”  
Living is now opened up to “peace”  
Jesus is Resurrected and His life of Heaven is our living  
Now.

No vaccine to push back for the moment death’s hand can save.  
It will leave us relieved ... but still cowering and cowed.  
Not a needle in a vein resisted or received.  
But a pierced Hand that destroys death ... that is salvation.  
And a fire breath engulfs and overwhelms with forgiveness  
And with gifts that free

Each gift the one God giving God as GIFT:

Holy Spirit living:  
Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude,  
Knowledge, Piety, And Fear of The Lord  
And the true God rejoices  
In our Divine Living.

## Day Five

### The Priest's daily bread: Eternal Life – Tasting the Lord anew

- “May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life”
  - “May the Blood of Christ keep me safe for eternal life”
  - “What has passed our lips as food, O Lord, may we possess in purity of heart, that what has been given to us in time may be our healing for eternity”.
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May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul unto life everlasting. Amen

What return shall I render unto the Lord for all he has given me? I will take the chalice of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. Praising I will call upon the Lord, and I shall be saved from my enemies.

May the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve my soul to life everlasting. Amen

(note that at the communion of the faithful is used the same prayer as the priest)

May the body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve your soul and to life everlasting. Amen.

Grant O Lord that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with the pure mind; and from a temporal gift may it become to us an eternal remedy.

May Thy Body, O Lord which I have consumed, and Thy Blood which I have drunk, clinging to my vitals; and grant that no wicked stain may remain in me, whom these pure and holy mysteries have refreshed. Who lives and reigns, forever and ever. Amen

there is a final prayer that has been committed completely:

May the performance of my homage be pleasing to Thee, O holy Trinity: and grant that the sacrifice which I, though unworthy, have offered up in the sight of Thy majesty, may be acceptable unto Thee, and may, through Thy mercy, be a propitiation for myself and all those for whom I have offered it. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

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- ❖ From *Sacramentum Caritatis*: “priestly spirituality is intrinsically Eucharistic. The seeds of the spirituality are already found in the words spoken by the bishop during the ordination liturgy: “Receive the oblation of the holy people to be offered to God. Understand what you do, imitate what you celebrate, and conform your life to the mystery of the Lord’s Cross.” ... An intense spiritual life will enable him to enter more deeply into communion with the Lord and to let himself be possessed by God’s love, bearing witness to that love at all times, even the darkest and most difficult. To this end I joined the Synod Fathers in recommending “the daily celebration of Mass even when the faithful are not present.” This recommendation is consistent with the objective will he infinite value of every celebration of the Eucharist, and is motivated by the Mass’s unique spiritual fruitfulness. If celebrated and faith filled and attentive way. Masses formative in the deepest sense of the word, since it fosters the priests configuration to Christ and strengthens him and his vocation. [SC ¶ 80]



- From *The Spirit of the Liturgy*:

“The moment when the Lord comes down and transforms bread and wine to become his Body and Blood cannot fail to stun, to the very core of their being, those who participate in the Eucharist by faith and prayer. When this happens, we cannot do other than fall to our knees and greet him. The consecration is the moment of God’s great *actio* in the world for us. It draws our eyes and hearts on high. For a moment the world is silent, everything is silent, and in that silence, we touch the eternal – for one beat of the heart we step out of time into God’s being-with-us.

Another approach to the question of content – filled silence is provided by the liturgy itself. There is a silence that is part of the liturgical action, not an interruption. I’m thinking of the silent prayers of the priest. Those who hold a sociological or activist view of the priest’s duties in the Mass frown upon these prayers, and whenever possible, they leave them out. The priest is defined in the narrowly sociological and functionalistic way as the “presider” at the liturgical celebration, which is thought of as a kind of meeting. If that is what he is, then, of course, for the sake of the meeting, he has to be in action all the time. But the priest’s duties in the Mass are much more than a matter of chairing a meeting. The priest presides over an encounter with the living God and as a person who is on his way to God. The silent prayers of the priest invite him to make his task truly personal, so that he may give his whole life to the Lord. They highlight the way in which all of us, each one personally yet together with everyone else, have to approach the Lord. The number of these priestly prayers has been greatly reduced in the liturgical reform, but, thank God, they do exist – they have to exist, now as before...

The priest’s reception of Holy Communion is preceded by two very beautiful and profound prayers, which from which to, to avoid the silence being too long, he is to choose one. Perhaps we shall again one day take the time to use both.

*“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit, through your Death gave life to the world, free me by this, your most holy Body and Blood, from all my sins and from every evil; keep me always faithful to your commandments, and never let me be parted from you.”*

*“May the receiving of your Body and Blood, Lord Jesus Christ, not bring me to judgment and condemnation, but through your loving mercy be for me protection in mind and body and a healing remedy.”*

But even if only one of them is prayed, the priest should with all the more reason really pray it in recollected silence as a personal preparation for receiving the Lord. This will help to bring everyone else into silence before the Sacred Presence, and then going to Communion will not degenerate into something merely external.

This is particularly necessary, because in the present order of the Mass the sign of peace frequently causes a lot of hustle and bustle in the congregation, into which the invitation to “Behold the Lamb of God” then comes as a rather abrupt intervention. If in a moment of quiet the eyes of the hearts of all are directed toward the Lamb, this can become a time of blessed silence. After the priest’s reception of communion another (formally, there were two) silent prayer of thanksgiving is provided for him, which again can and should be made their own by the faithful.

*Grant O Lord that what we have taken with our mouth, we may receive with the pure mind; and from a temporal gift may it become to us an eternal remedy.*

*May Thy Body, O Lord which I have consumed, and Thy Blood which I have drunk, clinging to my vitals; and grant that no wicked stain may remain in me, whom these pure and holy mysteries have refreshed. Who lives and reigns, forever and ever. Amen*

❖ From *Spe Salvi* Pope of Pope Benedict

“do we really want this—to live eternally? Perhaps many people reject the faith today simply because they do not find the prospect of eternal life attractive. What they desire is not eternal life at all, but this present life, for which faith in eternal life seems something of an impediment. To continue living for ever—endlessly—appears more like a curse than a gift. Death, admittedly, one would wish to postpone for as long as possible. But to live always, without end—this, all things considered, can only be monotonous and ultimately unbearable. [SS, 10]

... On the one hand, we do not want to die; above all, those who love us do not want us to die. Yet on the other hand, neither do we want to continue living indefinitely, nor was the earth created with that in view. So what do we really want? Our paradoxical attitude gives rise to a deeper question: what in fact is “life”? And what does “eternity” really mean? There are moments when it suddenly seems clear to us: yes, this is what true “life” is—this is what it should be like. Besides, what we call “life” in our everyday language is not real “life” at all. Saint Augustine, in the extended letter on prayer which he addressed to Proba, a wealthy Roman widow and mother of three consuls, once wrote this: ultimately we want only one thing—“the blessed life”, the life which is simply *life*, simply “*happiness*”. In the final analysis, there is nothing else that we ask for in prayer. Our journey has no other goal—it is about this alone. But then Augustine also says: looking more closely, we have no idea what we ultimately desire, what we would really like. We do not know this reality at all; even in those moments when we think we can reach out and touch it, it eludes us. “*We do not know what we should pray for as we ought,*” he says, quoting Saint Paul (Rom 8:26). All we know is that it is not this. Yet in not knowing, we know that this reality must exist. “There is therefore in us a certain learned ignorance (*docta ignorantia*), so to speak”, he writes. We do not know what we would really like; we do not know this “true life”; and yet we know that there must be something we do not know towards which we feel driven. [SS, 11]

12. I think that in this very precise and permanently valid way, Augustine is describing man's essential situation, the situation that gives rise to all his contradictions and hopes. In some way we want life itself, true life, untouched even by death; yet at the same time we do not know the thing towards which we feel driven. We cannot stop reaching out for it, and yet we know that all we can experience or accomplish is not what we yearn for. This unknown "thing" is the true "hope" which drives us, and at the same time the fact that it is unknown is the cause of all forms of despair and also of all efforts, whether positive or destructive, directed towards worldly authenticity and human authenticity. The term "eternal life" is intended to give a name to this known "unknown". Inevitably it is an inadequate term that creates confusion. "Eternal", in fact, suggests to us the idea of something interminable, and this frightens us; "life" makes us think of the life that we know and love and do not want to lose, even though very often it brings more toil than satisfaction, so that while on the one hand we desire it, on the other hand we do not want it. To imagine ourselves outside the temporality that imprisons us and, in some way, to sense that eternity is not an unending succession of days in the calendar, but something more like the supreme moment of satisfaction, in which totality embraces us and we embrace totality—this we can only attempt. It would be like plunging into the ocean of infinite love, a moment in which time—the before and after—no longer exists. We can only attempt to grasp the idea that such a moment is life in the full sense, a plunging ever anew into the vastness of being, in which we are simply overwhelmed with joy. This is how Jesus expresses it in Saint John's Gospel: "I will see you again and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you" (16:22). We must think along these lines if we want to understand the object of Christian hope, to understand what it is that our faith, our being with Christ, leads us to expect.

❖ From *Short Meditations For Priests* from the French of Rev. A. M. Meley, C.Ss.R., 1957.  
The Thought Of Heaven Encourages Us

"Let not your hearts be troubled... In my father's house there are many mansions" (John 14:1-2) the thought of heaven sustains us in the practice of virtue.

Jesus Christ knows this well; therefore, he keeps continually before us the hope of eternal happiness. He insists, indeed, that we be poor, meek and humble of heart, merciful, pure, patient; but he adds: *Beati pauperes ... Beati mites ...*

He exacts of his apostles that they leave all things to follow him, but in return, what a magnificent reward will be theirs – eternal life! *Vitam aeternam possidebitis.*

... Let us think of heaven. Let us be convinced that the promises made by our Lord to the apostles are made to us also. May the remembrance of the surpassing reward laid up for us by Jesus detaches from the world. May it animate us to sanctify ourselves and labour zealously for the salvation of souls.

Prayer

*O Jesus, my weakness and lack of courage or due to the fact that I think so seldom of the reward of heaven. Pardon me, my God, I wish to correct myself. Sursum Corda. I will keep up my heart.*

*O Mary, my mother, grant that my thoughts, desires, affections – all the transports of my soul, may be for heaven. Amen*