



Adsum

Adsum is published by the seminarians of **Mater Dei Seminary** for the enjoyment of our families, friends, and benefactors.

LETTER FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends and Benefactors,

A most blessed and grace-filled feast of Our Lord's glorious Resurrection to all of you! May this newsletter find all of our readers in good health both of soul and body!

Although the government health restrictions have required Mater Dei Academy to close and have limited the number of our faithful at Mass attendance, nevertheless the seminary classes and schedule have not been affected by the Covid-19 virus issue. Father Sellner, Fr. Borja, Fr. Sandquist, and Fr. Geckle continue to provide Mass and the Sacraments every weekend, always working within the guidelines set by the states here in the Midwest. Fortunately Nebraska and Iowa have not issued any stay home orders, so we have been able to travel quite freely.

However, for our priests in other states, our advice has been to do as much as they can sacramentally for the faithful while following government guidelines.

For our seminarians, Holy Week is a great opportunity for all of them to participate in the sacred liturgy. Many of them accompanied the priests to their particular churches and chapels throughout the Midwest

to assist in these solemn ceremonies. There is no better way for them to prepare for the priesthood and one day to perform these sacred rites than by the actual serving at them. Palm Sunday, the chanting of Tenebrae, the Mass of Chrism, the Mass of the Last Supper, Good Friday liturgy, and the Easter vigil are all a part of their seminary training.

One of the crosses to be carried by our faithful with the restrictions from the coronavirus has been the postponement of weddings and cancellations for high school graduations. In regard to our upcoming ordinations on May 11th, they will not be postponed regardless of whether family or friends of the ordinandi are able to attend. Many of them come from different parts of the states and their travel restrictions and stay home orders may last to the end of May or even the middle of June. Nevertheless, we need to keep on schedule as to maintain the proper intervals between ordinations. Please



pray for the seminarians who will be receiving major orders and first tonsure this coming May!

Thank you once again for your prayers and support of our seminary and be always assured that you are remembered in our daily prayers as well.

With my prayers and blessing,
Most Rev. Mark A. Pivarunas, CMRI



Tenebrae—the solemn chanting of Matins and Lauds for Holy Thursday



Pontifical High Mass for the Mass of Chrism on Holy Thursday morning



Blessing of the Sacred Oils



Behold the Wood of the Cross on which hung the Savior of the world.



Blessing of the Paschal Fire



Easter Midnight Mass

Father Connell Answers Moral Questions

by Very Rev. Francis J. Connell, C.S.S.R., S.T.D., LL.D., L.H.D.

EFFECTS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Question: Can the reception of Holy Communion by a pregnant woman have any sanctifying effect on the child she is bearing in her womb?

Answer: There can be no direct sanctifying effect on the soul of an unborn child from the presence of the Holy Eucharist in the body of its mother. For, in the first place, the direct sanctifying effect of the Blessed Sacrament is bestowed only on those who receive it as food. Now, in the case presented, only the mother receives the Body and Blood of Christ as food. Secondly, the sacramental benefit of Holy Communion is bestowed only on a baptized recipient. An unbaptized person, even though he partook of the Blessed Sacrament *per modum manducationis*, would derive from it no sacramental grace. From this standpoint also, the unborn child, being unbaptized, can receive no direct sanctification from the Holy Communion of its mother.

However, it cannot be denied that indirectly benefits of a spiritual nature can be—and perhaps often are—conferred on a child in its mother's womb from her devout reception of Holy Communion. When Our Divine Savior visits her soul, she can pray that her little one will be granted the grace of baptism, and will be a devout Catholic. A pious Catholic woman, when she receives Holy Communion in the course of her pregnancy, may pray that the grace of a religious or priestly vocation will be conferred on the child who will soon be born to her. Prayers recited after Holy Communion are endowed with special efficacy, and hence we can reasonably believe that a prayer recited on that occasion by a devout mother of the child she bears in her womb will often obtain the favors she asks.

PARENTS RECEIVING WITH FIRST COMMUNICANTS

Question: What is to be said of the custom, prevailing in some parishes, of having the parents of each first communicant receive Holy Communion with the child, in the sanctuary or at the altar rail? Some priests extend this custom to children whose parents cannot or will not receive with them—for example, if they are non-Catholics, divorced, etc.—in such wise that they select a man and a woman from the congregation who will accompany the boy or girl to the altar in the manner described, thus acting, so to say, as proxies for the child's parents.

Answer: It would seem that the influence brought to bear on the parents of the first communicants to persuade them to receive Holy Communion with their boys and girls would be equivalent to the type of moral coercion which was condemned in an instruction of the Congregation of the Sacraments, given Dec. 8, 1938 (cf. Bouscaren, *Canon Law Digest*, II [Milwaukee: Bruce, 1943], 208 ff.). This instruction was concerned mainly with coercion exercised on seminarians and religious and on young folks in schools or colleges; but the rules it lays down are evidently based on principles applicable to more general conditions, such as the prescription that superiors must strive “to remove all circumstances which might expose those who do not receive to astonishment from the others.” Now, it would surely arouse astonishment and comment in a parish if some of the Catholic parents refused to receive Holy Communion with their children, while all the others accompanied their sons and daughters to the altar. Consequently, some might be induced through human respect to partake of the Blessed Sacrament sacrilegiously.

These objections would not be present if the parents were invited to receive Holy Communion at the Mass in which their children are communicating for the first time, with the understanding that they will approach the altar rail after all the children have received, without observing any definite order. Thus, it would be difficult to know which parents received Holy Communion and which did not.

Adsum, a publication by the seminarians of **MATER DEI SEMINARY** for the reading enjoyment of friends and benefactors, is sent free of charge to all who request it. If you are interested, please provide your name and mailing address to:

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