



# THE ABSENCE OF THE BAPTIZED AT SUNDAY MASS

(A sign of the absence of appreciation for Christ Jesus and His love for us.)

Two weeks have passed since the Church in Freeport, with our Baptized brothers and sisters around the world, entered into the Glorious Season of Easter! For some Catholics, that entrance took place after sunset on Holy Saturday with the celebration of the Easter Vigil: the "mother of all vigils" as it is called in the Roman Missal. At that celebration, thousands of people around the world, after the Service of Light and the Liturgy of the Word, with their reception of the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist), were borne into the Catholic Church! (Welcome home Eva Pichardo!)



For most of us, the entrance into these fifty days and fifty nights of Easter (Easter Sunday – Pentecost Sunday) probably took place on Easter Sunday itself during what was hopefully experienced as an uplifting/spirit-raising celebration of the Lord’s Resurrection; a celebration prepared for in a Parish by Priests, Deacons, Religious, Staff, Employees, and Volunteers who help to make *coming home what it’s all about* not just at Easter, but all throughout the year! And while I cannot say that **all** of Freeport’s Baptized Catholics were in attendance for the celebration, it would appear from **all** the Masses (even those that took place in the gymnasium of Our Holy Redeemer School-building) that many of the Baptized did *come home*!



On the Sunday after the *standing room only* Easter-experience, those of us who *came home* for Mass heard not the tale of the Empty Tomb, but rather two tales from the Upper Room where, even though the doors were locked, Jesus appeared to the Apostles and offered them Peace. Thomas, after being told: “We have seen the Lord” by those who were there the first time the Lord appeared in the Upper Room after His Resurrection, said: “Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe” (cf. Saint John XX:19-31). (He was given that opportunity on the following Sunday. He saw. He believed.)

“From these words emerges,” writes Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, “the conviction that Jesus can now be recognized by His wounds rather than by His face. Thomas holds that the signs that confirm Jesus’ identity are now above all His wounds, in which He reveals to us how much He loved us. In this the Apostle is not mistaken” (General Audience, 27 September 2006).

The realization of that Love is what drops Thomas to his knees with what Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI calls “the most splendid profession of faith in the whole of the New Testament”. “My Lord and my God!” (General Audience, 27 September 2006)

What seems to be missing from our Easter Sunday celebrations of the Holy Eucharist at Holy Mass is definitely not the people! What seems to be missing from our Easter Sunday celebrations of the Holy Eucharist is perhaps what is missing from all of our Sunday celebrations: a deep awareness of, and a real appreciation for the truth that Christ truly suffered, died, and was buried before He truly rose from the dead.

If in fact that awareness and appreciation is missing from our Sunday at Mass-encounters with Christ Jesus Risen from the Dead, Jesus in today’s Gospel tells us how to restore it. “Look at My hands and My feet”! Yes, look at those wounds endured for love of you, and let what you see drop you to your knees and raise you up to bear witness in the world for love of Him!

