

St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

160 Court Street, Buffalo, New York

TRADITIONALLY SPEAKING by S. Casarotto, cs 1/11/09

THE SACRED MYSTERY in the early days of the Church, people who were not baptized and those who had defected from the faith were excluded from the Mysteries. After the instruction (Liturgy of the Word), the deacon invited the no baptized to leave: *Exeant omnes!* How can we worthily participate in the Lord's Supper and call God *Our Father* if we are not first His adopted children through Baptism? Or how can we be one with our brothers in the prayer of the Church if we have disowned the faith of the Church? The Mysteries were so sacred that they were very carefully disclosed only to the newly baptized and protected at the cost of one's own life.

In the revised Ordo of the mass, after Consecration, the priest or deacon invites the congregation to "proclaim the mystery of faith". For us Catholics, this "mystery" is far more than something strange, mysterious or unknown. It is the Sacrifice of the Cross renewed on the altar. Christ's Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity become truly present in the Sacred Species. Early Christian writers lacked the vocabulary to express the new spiritual realities they were pondering. They often recycled existing words giving them new meanings Such is the case with the Latin word *mysterium*, which echoes Greek *mysterion*.

Tertullian (+225) translated Greek *mysterion* by means of the Latin *sacramentum* or sacrament. This word has its root in *sacer* or sacred with its religious connotation (like *sacerdos* or priest). The Eucharist is the Sacrament par excellence: not a piece of bread and a cup of wine, not something simply blessed and assigned to ritual use. The words of consecration change the bread and wine making them sacred and pertaining to the nature of God. The mass does not need to be made meaningful and relevant.

The great Mystery of Faith can never be explained but only adored. St. Augustine wrote: "*No one can eat of that Body without first having adored It. We would sin in not adoring It.*" He also said: "*Don't try to understand so that you may believe, but believe and then you will understand!*"

WERE THE APOSTLES MARRIED?

Some people claim that the Apostles were married. The only sure thing we know is that Peter was married because Jesus cured his mother-in-law (*Mk. 1, 30*). Most likely, Peter was a widower when he followed Jesus. This does not mean that the other apostles were also married. The Gospels mention several women's names among the disciples, including relatives of the apostles. If the apostles were married, their wives and children would certainly be mentioned, especially Peter's wife. There was enough trouble when Zebedee's wife, mother of James and John, asked Jesus to keep in mind her two sons in His kingdom (*Mt. 20, 23*). Besides, don't you think that the apostles' wives would have told their husbands: "Honey, come home early tonight!" or "When are you going to get paid?" or "Don't follow that loser!"