



NATIONAL Eucharistic Revival



Interview with Gerardine O'Connor

My name is Gerardine O'Connor. In 1989 I moved to Colorado from Ireland. I have been married to Charles for 34 years; we have a daughter named Helen. I am happy to be a part of the SJB family. I am a lector, part of the choir, a helping hand for the gardening and decorating, and I also work in the parish.

What has your experience been with the Eucharist?

I made my first Communion in Limerick, Ireland at the parish of St. Michael, the Archangel, when I was 6 years old. My mom said that my first Communion dress should be simple, not elaborate because this was a solemn occasion. At the time the Mass was in Latin. I remember it being special, but as a kid I did not really understand what was going on. I recall going to the railing to receive Communion. I knew that something sacred was being held in the patent because the patent was gold.

My family went to Mass every Sunday. I usually went with my mom early and my dad would go with my siblings later, but after Mass we had lunch together. Everyone dressed up and treated the house of God with dignity and respect. The men would take their caps off when they entered the church and the women would all wear hats or veils. When I was older and went to a boarding school run by nuns, I not only went to Mass on Sundays but every other day.

My relationship with God changed when I came to St. John the Baptist. Before coming here, I did not understand much about our faith nor did I think to learn about it. When I arrived Patty Maldonado welcomed me and I saw how she helped other people. I realized how much the priests do and how much they give of themselves. I witnessed how compassionate Fr. Angel is. I thought- if this is what really goes on in church, then I want to be a part of this. My whole attitude changed. Since being here, I cannot live without God anymore because He gives me strength in difficult moments. I've learned that life is not always about me. I have come to appreciate and love the Eucharist. Now I listen to every word of the Consecration and I am touched by how many times in the Mass the forgiveness of sins is brought up. I am moved by the reverence of the priests at Mass.

I know that I still have a long way to go with regards to appreciating, loving and understanding the Eucharist and our faith, but I know that the Lord will help me. A few years, while watching a video on the Mass, at the time of Consecration, I had a powerful experience. A profound feeling washed over me and enveloped me while at the same time I felt pulled by or drawn to the Lord. It's hard to explain, but it felt like the Lord was asking me to give up everything and do something for Him. I see that the more we grow to love the Eucharist, the more we grow in our faith. When I look at the round lights in the church ceiling, they remind me of the Consecrated Host and it makes me feel like the Lord is embracing us.

Do you have a favorite Eucharistic miracle?

I am impressed with the Eucharistic miracles that occurred in Argentina while Pope Francis was a Cardinal there. It's amazing how in all the Eucharistic miracles the research shows the same thing- that the blood comes from heart tissue, that the blood type is AB and that the blood has extra white cells which are produced when someone is injured. It's incredible that after 100 years there would still be blood on a Consecrated Host.