

**January 22, 2023**

Dear Friends,

In my reflection on the front of the Paduan for today I invite you to take a moment and look around. When you do you will begin to see so many things that are not. And there are many things which are not or should not be or are missing or lacking from our lives, our culture, our society, our nation, our world. We are aware.

One of the things which strikes us is that for so many of our young Catholics the sacramental practice of the faith has been placed on the back burner. The imagery behind such a comment is that on the back burner the heat is reduced and so whatever is on that burner is just being kept warm for now but not actively being cooked with the view of being consumed. What is on the back burner is considered to be somewhat important but not critically important or immediately important. The thinking is that we will get to it sometime in the future and give our full attention to the “back-burner-ed” item.

I would like to suggest a prayer for you to consider for your daily praying. It is to be prayed by you for those of your family or friends who were raised in our Catholic faith but who have placed the practice of their Catholic faith on such a back burner. The prayer is that they would be prompted by the Holy Spirit to realize that something is missing from their lives, something that they had once upon a time but they no longer have. I pray that this prayer will help them to come to the realization that the something missing is actually not a thing. It is not that there is some-thing missing, but some-one. The someone is Our Lord. Especially in the Blessed Sacrament. Especially in Mass. Especially in Communion. Below is the prayer.

*Father, we have a simple prayer we place before you. Lay your healing hands upon all our children, including those who have walked or wandered away from the spiritual and sacramental practice of their faith. Bring them back, O Lord. They have moved beyond the practice of their Catholic faith.*

*There are remnants of faith but Mass has become less important. They believe they are basically good people who strive to be their best selves by being true to themselves.*

*Our faith is viewed as only being about the rules, commandments, and mandates. They do not see that faith is actually much less about these things; and much more about You, and your love for us all. Much more about living in the Truth that You are, O Lord.*

*A connection has gone missing. This is not fully grasped. They do not yet grasp this simple truth—they have lost their connection to You. The Vine. But we who have loved them into life and formed them in faith, know that this connection to You is vital to their lives, their love, their happiness.*

*And so, we pray, O Lord. That they will soon recognize anew that You are real. Realize that Your Love alone abides. We so love our children, Lord. We so love You. Please guide them. Prompt them. Awaken them. May they come to realize that You, Father, as the father of the prodigal son goes down to the road each evening to look for their return. As do we. It is for this return we pray. In the Name of Jesus, Your Beloved Son, we pray. Amen.*

Peace,

Msgr. McHenry