The human body has an extraordinary natural tendency to live. If you talk to any physician, you'll learn that the body is really tough. So for example, in the case of hypothermia, the extremities begin to lose blood flow because the body is trying to save the internal organs. So the body is constantly resisting death. The body naturally wants to be alive.

Now, in the abuse of human free will, death entered the world; Sin is a saying of yes to the desires of the body. It is selfishness. Sin is saying “how am I going to please myself right now?” Sin can take various forms, but ultimately it is saying yes to the self.

And so to mitigate that (to reverse that) Our Lord Jesus Christ, in his willingness to suffer and die, is performing the ultimate “no” to the body to counter the ultimate “yes” of His creation to selfishness, to sin. He freely did this. Our Lord says in St. John’s Gospel chapter 10: “No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.”

The reason why Christ sacrificed Himself, He was crucified and was killed by His own creation, that would be us, so that He could say, “No” and counter the “Yes” that we had said to sin.

Now, some would say that Catholics crucify Jesus Christ, again and again and again due to what we believe about the Sacrifice of the Mass. The crucifixion of Our Lord happened in a time and a space; however, God operates outside of time and space. He is not bound by seconds, days, years, months, and hours, centuries, as we are. Or more precisely, as we subject ourselves to, rather.

For God, there is the eternal now. God told Moses at his name is “I am who am.” In his world and in the life of God it is an eternal now. And so when the Holy Mass is offered, it is the same sacrifice of Jesus at Mount Calvary.

As a priest, so often I hear people say, “well I don’t go to Mass because I don’t get anything out of it.”

Well the problem with that logic is that we are stuck in a culture in which we are constantly being stimulated in the psychological and emotional realms of ourselves. We’ve got TV, movies, Netflix, YouTube, iPads and smart phones and their apps, Instagram, snapchat, and if you don’t know what in the world I’m talking about, don’t worry about it....but we have this constant stimulation going on...and what happens is when it comes time for silence, when it comes time for contemplation, and it comes time to reflect upon the deepest mysteries of God, and the deepest mysteries of our hearts, we are so used to being emotionally stimulated that we feel that it is too difficult to pray and we quit.
This is why as a priest I also hear people say: well, “Fr. So and So” is energetic, he has entertaining sermons, and he walks up and down the aisle, and he makes everybody laugh; and Fr. Bob is old, he is almost dead, he is boring, and he doesn't engage me.

Well, allow me to ask you a question then, perhaps you aren't being emotionally stimulated? Is that the issue? It isn't about getting something out of Mass is it? You aren't stimulated. Go to the movies if you need to be stimulated.

As Catholics, when we come to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, you are kneeling in front of the Crucifix, before the same Christ, who died nearly 2,000 years ago (our time), but who lives outside of time.

The mural that we have in our beautiful church, is a very appropriate depiction of what we do as Catholics in the Celebration of the Mass.

When the priest offers the Sacrifice of the Mass, it is the same Sacrifice that Christ offered at the Last Supper on Holy Thursday and the same Sacrifice he consummated upon the Cross on Good Friday. You, you who live in the year of Our Lord 2014, will not be cheated because you happen to live at this moment in human history. That would be beating cheated. We are followers of Jesus Christ and yet we don't get the same benefit of being with Christ Crucified? Not at all! The sacrifice that you see at Holy Mass today is the same sacrifice that happened at Calvary nearly 2,000 years ago our time.

I have a priest friend who is a chaplain in the United States Army and the last time I saw him he shared many stories of celebrating the Mass in the oddest places and in horrible conditions in Iraq and Afghanistan. He even shared an experience of offering Mass while a gunfight was going on just one block away. The Lord Jesus Christ became present at that Altar at the same time as if the Mass were being celebrated by our Holy Father in St. Peter’s basilica in Rome. It’s the same Mass, it’s the same Sacrifice. Now one might be more emotionally stimulating than the other.

It’s just like for you families who come to Mass and you have your children with you. Your children, sometimes (hopefully we pray not very often) will cause you anxiety because we are running late to Mass, they want this and they want that, and we are trying to stay quiet and pray the Mass, and “Mommy, I have to go to the bathroom.” Etc etc... So you might not “get something out of Mass” in that particular scenario...(so you think), but you always, always receive the grace of being present at the Lord’s Sacrifice. We always receive grace from the Holy Mass.

Now you may not always receive emotional stimulation, but the Lord Jesus Christ promised eternal life and not perpetual stimulation. So we are going to have to learn to go without sometimes. But we always receive the grace and power of Christ in and through the Holy Mass.
So that way, you can say to the Lord on the day of the particular judgment, “Lord, I never abandoned you at the Altar. I never abandoned you at the Cross. I was present at your Cross; because I attended Holy Mass.”

The one thing that we must remember is that the Lord appointed priests to offer the sacrifice. Again, those of you who are parents know that you did not create your children out of nothing. You and your spouse participated in God’s loving plan for your family. You were participants in creation; you were not its originators. So the Lord used you, sinful though you be, to participate in the creation of the greatest of his creatures, a human person. That’s how much God loves us!

In the same way, he uses sinful priests, in the act of offering the Sacrifice of the Mass. So when Fr. Dave Gwinner says, “This is my body” or Fr. Michael Hinterschied says, “This is my body”, the host doesn’t become the body of Fr. Gwinner or Fr. Hinterschied, it becomes the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. So God is using the priest as a participant in redemption, not in creation, in redemption.

So it doesn’t matter who the priest is offering the Mass. It could be an energetic kind of priest that everyone likes, or he could be a priest who no one really cares for, you want him to get to heaven, but you don’t want to sit next to him. But the Lord still uses him, as a minister of His redemption!

That’s the beauty of our Catholic Faith. It is a very earthy faith. We are baptized with water, we truly consume His Body and Blood, we must physically confess our sins, we are confirmed with oil. The Christian faith is a very earthy faith because Christ has redeemed all of creation.

God did not create the human person to die, to simply cease to exist. Are you kidding me? Not with the ability to love that we have, not with the ability to reason that we have, and all the other gifts and talents that we possess. The Lord created us for something far greater! But we have to accept the Lord’s invitation to participate in our salvation.